DIVISION | REVIEW
A QUARTERLY PSYCHOANALYTIC FORUM NO.20 WINTER 2020

To Review

David LICHTENSTEIN

As this is the final issue of our 10th year and we will begin the transition to a new Editor, Dr. Loren Dent, I want to take the occasion to reflect briefly on the history of the publication and review its trajectory. We created the *Review* in 2010, at a time of considerable uncertainty about both the future of print publication and that of our complex and diverse field. While the coherence of society at large may now be more uncertain than ever, our professional field and our particular society of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychology including its publications has shown an encouraging resilience. I am grateful to the membership and the leaders of Division 39 for supporting this project and for giving me an opportunity to be part of it.

Regarding the present circumstance and vitality of the psychoanalytic field, it is not that we have resolved the many internal differences, nor that we agree more uniformly about our theories and principles, but rather, I believe, we are more articulate about our differences and more prepared to accept that they reflect the true complexity of our field and thus should not be resolved by facile synthesis nor by the dominance of a single school.

One of the founding principles behind *DIVISION/Review* was that diverse schools of psychoanalytic theory and practice should share the pages of a single journal instead of being segregated in publications,

Official publication of Division of Psychoanalysis (39) of the American Psychological Association

"Ox Herding" and the Art of Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy

Henry M. SEIDEN, Peter LIN, and William FRIED

Abstract

In this paper, we consider the classical Chinese metaphor of "ox herding" as a path to Zen enlightenment. In so doing, we find a telling analogy to the path to the mature and developed practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

•••

In offering this meditation on an extended metaphor, we take a position which is at once in our experience universally embraced among our colleagues and at the same time – in the current clinical/professional climate – unfashionable and often all but disowned. (See, for example, recent references to the recommendation for "evidence-based psychotherapy" and the controversy it has engendered [Shedler, 2013a, 2013b, and 2017; McCay, 2017; Mazur, 2017]). *Our view is that the practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy is an art and not a science.* It is, to be sure, an art *supported* by science, by whatever empirical regularities science may turn up.[1] (We use the terms "psychotherapy" and psychoanalytic psychotherapy interchangeably. We assume practitioners of other forms of psychotherapy will have their own positions on the relationship between the art and the science of their practice.) But it is not science.

Our conviction grows out of a personal immersion – as psychoanalytic practitioners continually involved in the development and the contemporary sub-culture of our shared art. Our view grows too out of ever-interesting and ever-fruitful personal collaborations and ongoing interaction among the authors (see for example Lin, and Seiden [2015a, 2015b] and Seiden and Fried [2015]).

We start from the notion that working through the stages of self-mastery and self-transcendence involved in developing as a Zen adept and eventually enlightened master is also an *art.* The process by which this development takes place has powerful analogy with the development of any serious art (be it painting, dance, music, poetry, photography), where ultimately, in W. B. Yeats's felicitous phrase, one cannot tell the dancer from the dance. That is, where the art and the self who practices the art become indistinguishable. We think the practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy is such an art.

1. One becomes mindful of the important interdependence of art and science from a reading of Walter Isaacson's recent biography of Leonardo Da Vinci (2017). Leonardo's science, his dissections of the body, his optical studies, his engineering projects, his study of wave forms, his understanding and sketches of the dynamics of motion, his appreciation of perspectival geometry, for example, contributed in an essential way to the greatness of his art. But the greatness of that art could never be reduced to the application of scientific protocols and principles – however brilliantly observed.

The Classical Chinese Metaphor

The classical Chinese "ox herding" metaphor describes the stages one must go through in Zen (or *Chan*, in Chinese) practice from beginning seeker to enlightenment. It is an ancient notion – an extended metaphor that first appeared in painting and poetry in Sung Dynasty (10th-12th century AD) China. Over the centuries, it has had many different and admiring expressions in both painting and poetry and in master teachers' discourses. Traditional Chinese art typically included poetry and painting in the same scrolls. It should be noted that the animal representing enlightenment is sometimes thought of as a bull, and sometimes, in Tibetan tradition, as an elephant.

The ox herding metaphor starts with an attempt to capture the first and fascinated glimmer that there is some transcendence, some Zen way of being, some profound correspondence between inner and outer life, worth making the effort to incorporate and embody. It arrives at an approximation of the achievement of enlightenment – but only ever as a close approach to the achievement.

The Stages

We are greatly indebted to John M. Koller (2004) for his extensive discussion of "Ox-Herding: Stages of Zen Practice" in what follows in this section.

We are indebted too to Chan Master Sheng-Yen (2014), who presents and discusses the verses from *Manual of Zen Buddhism* by D. T. Suzuki (1934). The images found by following the link to the URL are by the 15th century Japanese Zen monk Tenshō Shūbun. Shūbun's images are said to be copies of originals, now lost, attributed to the 12th century Chinese Chan Master Kuoan Shiyuan, author of the original verses for the *Ten Ox Herding Pictures.*[2]

•••

The overriding understanding of the extended metaphor is that the ox represents enlightenment (or the realization of the true nature of the mind in Buddhist belief).

The stages of the search for enlightenment may be outlined briefly and in thumbnail as follows (we offer these in Koller's Western terms):

1. *The search for the ox.* The image and the poem show the oxherd desperately looking everywhere for his lost ox. He is seeking something he experiences in some way but as having been lost.

2. *Discovering the footprints.* The oxherd has now caught sight of the tracks of the ox. He is excited about the possibility of finding his ox but doesn't know yet how to find it.

3. *Perceiving the ox.* He has caught sight of the ox. He glimpses a hidden power (over his perplexity, his distress, his "vexations," perhaps his curiosity, the distant possibility of mastery), but does not know how to apply it.

4. *Catching the ox.* The central image is that the herder has now caught hold of the ox using the bridle of discipline (and training and study) to control it.

5. *Taming the ox.* The fifth image shows that disciplined practice can overcome bad habits of mind of previous conditioning and bring him more into accord with the "true" nature of reality.

6. *Riding the ox home.* The sixth image suggests the tranquility and satisfaction that reunion with "source of existence" brings. The oxherd rides on the ox and plays his flute. He can express his own creativity, play with his own creative process.

7. *The ox transcended.* In the seventh image, the oxherd realizes that the ox itself can be forgotten! The path to enlightenment is now about the transcendence in the experience of everyday things.

8. *Both ox and self transcended.* The eighth image suggests that when the duality of self and reality has been overcome, both disappear! The experience will be of awareness of ongoing transformation and interconnectedness – probably best described as the moment of startling, even shattering, insight.

9. *Reaching the source.* The ninth image: Self and reality – as constructs – are left behind. Things in the world are revealed to be just what they are. The ultimate is to be found in the ordinary.

10. *In the world.* The enlightened oxherd does all the ordinary things, but because of his deep awareness, everything he does is at the same time extraordinary. He shares his enlightened experience with those around him, who benefit greatly from his compassionate presence.

2. See http://chancenter.org/cmc/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/BookSummer2014web.pdf Also, Alan Watts would be among the commentators likely to be familiar to Western readers. He included a description of the Ten Bulls in *The Spirit of Zen* (1936). For an extensive list of images, commentaries, and references, see Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ten_Bulls#cite_note-12

The Practice of Psychotherapy as an Art

In what follows here, we will consider the process analogous to the ox herding metaphor by which we think psychotherapists become "enlightened" in the practice of their art.

We offer this with humility, in full recognition that analogy is not algorithm. There is no single protocol to follow and, certainly, there are no career steps to follow (as once was argued for in the early institutionalized development of our art). There are a handful of recommendations, institutes with prescribed curricula, but no longer is there an unalterable learning prescription. There are no carefully defined stages to enter into and pass through. Some therapists in learning their art will move along quickly in their grasp of and integration of their learning, and will take some real joy in their studies and training (sometimes more "rigorous," sometimes more casual). And they will take pleasure in the sense of accomplishment. The accomplishment, to say it again, is of making their art and themselves a kind of one: a way of being themselves both in the consulting room and in their lives.

We recognize the arrival at the late stages is arguably a kind of unreachable and illusive perfection.

A further caveat: the classical descriptions of the ox herding stages omit mention of the mentoring relationship and relationships which over millennia made for the cultural transmission of Zen Buddhism. Zen students sat at the feet of their teachers through successive generations. These relationships have been and continue to be crucial to that learning – as we know, they are crucial to learning the art of psychotherapy. (For example, see Magid [2013], who very carefully acknowledges the transmission of his own Zen practice through successive generations of teachers dating back to the 13th century.)

And more: our art, of course, is not a solitary pursuit, not that of a painter alone with canvas and brush. It is interactive. At its essence, it involves an embrace (hopefully artful) of the intricate, complex psychology of other people. And it involves an inevitable impossibility: that of knowing any other person, including our patients, in all their fullness. Ours is an art that cannot be perfected.

As to the matter of perfection, that is, the possibility of perfection in our own art or in any other, it is worth noting that Leonardo himself never thought he got there in his own art – the perfect always eluded him. The evidence is that he walked away or put aside his projects dissatisfied and with the conviction that they might have been better.

The Ox Herding Metaphor in Becoming a Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist

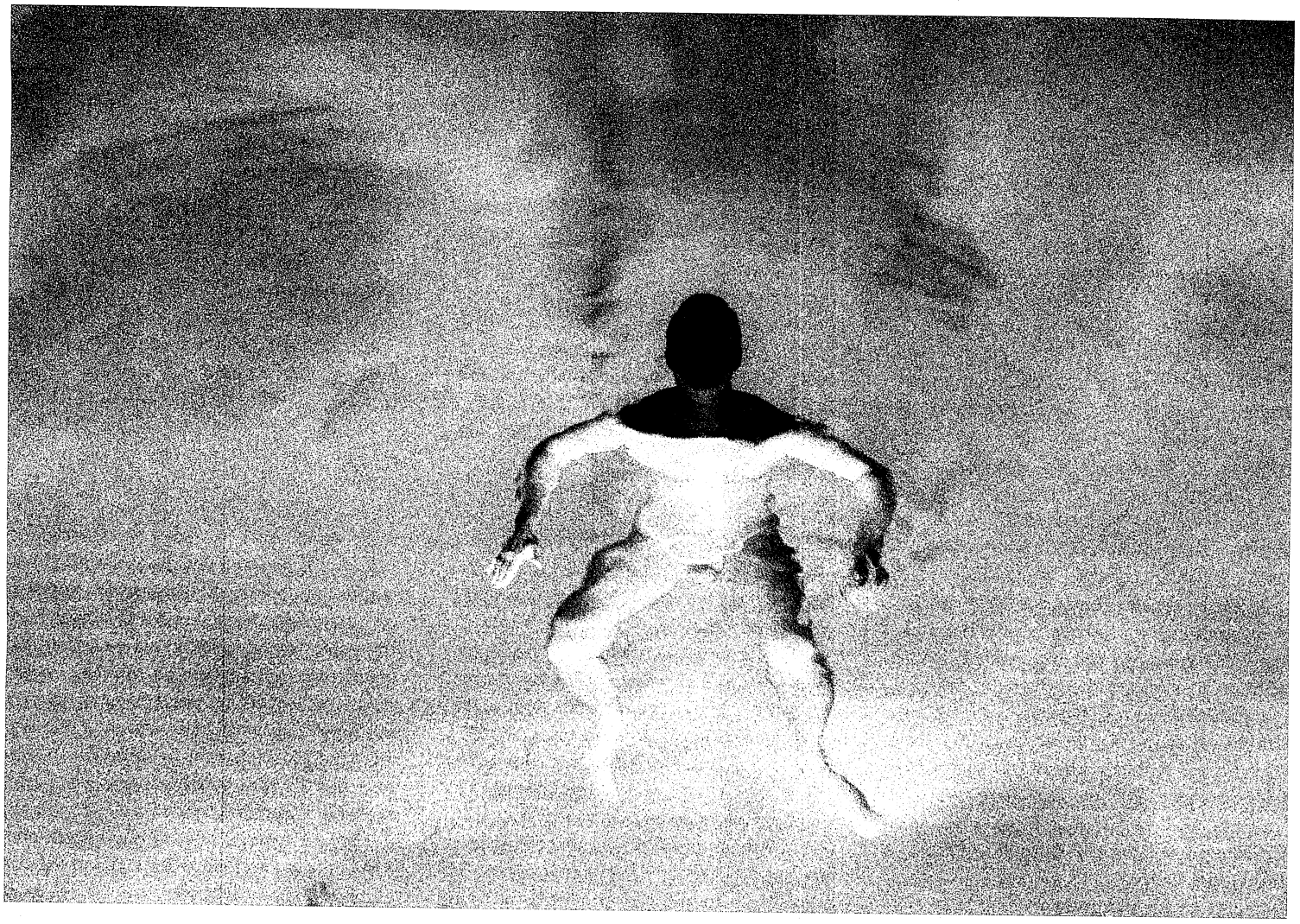
In reflecting, each of us, on our own developmental processes, we take the sequence of ox herding images as informing the discussion – but not as discrete steps. More, we think of the images as glimpses of awareness and clarity.

In the experience of learning to be a psychotherapist, one doesn't pass a "stage" never to go back. There's a kind of rhythm and recurrence of sensibility: a moving forwards, then a moving back, then a moving forward more permanently.

The first glimpse: a perplexing (and useful) curiosity. An intuitive sense that there is more to life (both in oneself and outside of it) than meets the eye. A sense that others too are in need of a similar contact and embrace. The sense of a motive in one's self to move in that direction.

The second awareness: a sense that making some sense of one's own experience and of that of other people is welcome to both parties and stabilizing. A respectful

Allen Frame, *Mississippi*



glimpse of the unconscious, like a sight of the ox's footprint!

The third glimpse: there is a world of such heretofore hidden experience and a language (even if clumsily spoken) for engaging. A sight of the ox – in a teacher, a book, a conversation with someone who already speaks the language of larger consciousness.

The fourth "accomplishment": a grasp (by work, study, reading, one's own analysis, clinical practicum supervision, and the like) of the language of psychodynamic psychotherapy and the conceptual basis for that language. Some developing sense of the treatment algorithm and the importance of unconscious processes. The ox is caught by the bridle!

The fifth experience: the beginnings of an integration, a more comfortable grasp of what psychotherapy is and what it isn't, the capacity to think and behave (speak) out of a sense of method that is becoming one's own. A useful awareness of unconscious motivation.

The sixth image: an increasing capacity to exercise creativity and individuality in one's performance of one's role, integration of a more personal style and way of working, a mindful expression of one's own personality and experience. A deeper grasp of relevant theory. An easy integration of the awareness of unconscious motivation. Satisfaction in the work.

The seventh image: a kind of disappearance in which theory recedes into the background of the work, along with a sense of responses coming from within the therapist and within the context of the relationship. Absence of a need to trace to a source or justify things being said and done.

The eighth image: an immediate experience of insight and of insight shared. A sense of boundary-less wholeness, of being in the "now." Sometimes thought of as being at once familiar and startlingly surprising. A rare and precious achievement – recurring from time to time.

The ninth image and the tenth: an increasing sense of presence in which the extraordinary seems ordinary. Probably to be seen only in master therapists of advanced age. The difference between the dancer and the dance disappears. Inner and outer realities are less and less different in a way that feels freeing, useful, and compassionate.

Commentary from the Authors – Our Individual Paths

In regard to the commentary that follows: One of us, Lin, is a practitioner and meditation teacher of Chan (the Chinese equivalent of Zen) Buddhism; Seiden and Fried are lifetime practitioners, teachers, and students of Western psychoanalytic psychotherapy who took different paths in getting to their current level of practice.

Seiden's Comment

Once I was working with an overly exuberant eight-year-old; we were sitting on the floor of my office playing cards. He showed me a card trick. I said, "Wow, how'd you learn that?!"

He said, "Aw, I was born knowing it!" Important to say: that wasn't the way anything was for me! I know I was born knowing nothing. But I started to learn early.

I can recount some landmark experiences in the course of my growing up – and growing into in my current level of practice of the art of psychotherapy. (To be clear: I make no claim of mastery, only of growing up!) These experiences correspond roughly to the stages outlined in the ox herding images – although I can't draw exact one-to-one comparisons.

My first glimmer of the ox had to do with my role in my family: my parents, my younger sister, and especially with my two grandmothers, one of whom lived with us, the other just down the block in our West Bronx neighborhood. All of them – and especially my grandmothers – talked to me when they didn't talk to each other! They shared feelings and anxieties. They expressed, usually inadvertently, their barely disguised ambivalence about each other. This with a ten-year old kid! I listened, I nodded. However much I didn't understand, I got enough of it to know that my listening (to what was said and to what wasn't) and my caring mattered. Of course, my own perplexities were part of it; their complicated feelings about each other upset my world; their anxiety made me anxious. Still, they loved me and I loved them. I learned early that my presence and attention made a difference – to them and to me. Can I say there was an ox somewhere? By ox, I mean a role in life as a somehow healing or salving (or possibly consoling is a better word) psychotherapist. I couldn't have named the ox; I didn't even know the term "psychotherapist."

That experience of making a difference, but always in a puzzled way, characterizes my entire early career. Starting with early generic social work, the street gang work I did between graduate schools, I found that saying back what I was hearing seemed to touch my interlocutors in a startling way. The street gang kids, a tough, delinquent, and largely lost bunch of young teenagers, seemed to respond to even a brief moment of understanding. And they appreciated it even when they were giving me a hard time – which I only later understood to be transferential. I was reading Carl Rogers then, his work on client-centered psychotherapy, and especially *On Becoming a Person* (1961). I had only a vague psychoanalytic notion of what transference might involve.

I remember early feedback from patients at the hospital in Brooklyn where I interned and began to learn to be a clinical psychologist, and similar feedback later in my beginning private practice. I'd be told by a patient about something helpful I had said – and found that what I had said was a surprise to me. And that often I hadn't paid much attention to that particular remark. I remember a woman who said, gratefully: "I'll never forget what you said – that there was no reason I couldn't have a family too." Generally, I thought my job was to be as "deep," as theoretically sound, as *psychoanalytic* as possible. I found that *plain and real* counted for far more. I was beginning to grasp the ox; not quite yet riding it, but beginning to get a grip.

This was true too in my own indispensably useful personal psychoanalysis. It was the ordinary truths I needed to hear from my analyst (my competitiveness, my anger, my ambition, and at the same time my despair at the possibility of accomplishment). And to hear myself hear. Not the fancy stuff.

I can say I felt myself getting better at the art of treatment, almost in proportion to the mistakes-in-life I was making. Which luckily (or it was karmic) I found a way to recover from: like achievement troubles in college and graduate school, where I was always reaching, grandiosely, for too much and then not delivering – to the annoyance and frustration of my teachers, who were often quick to punish me.

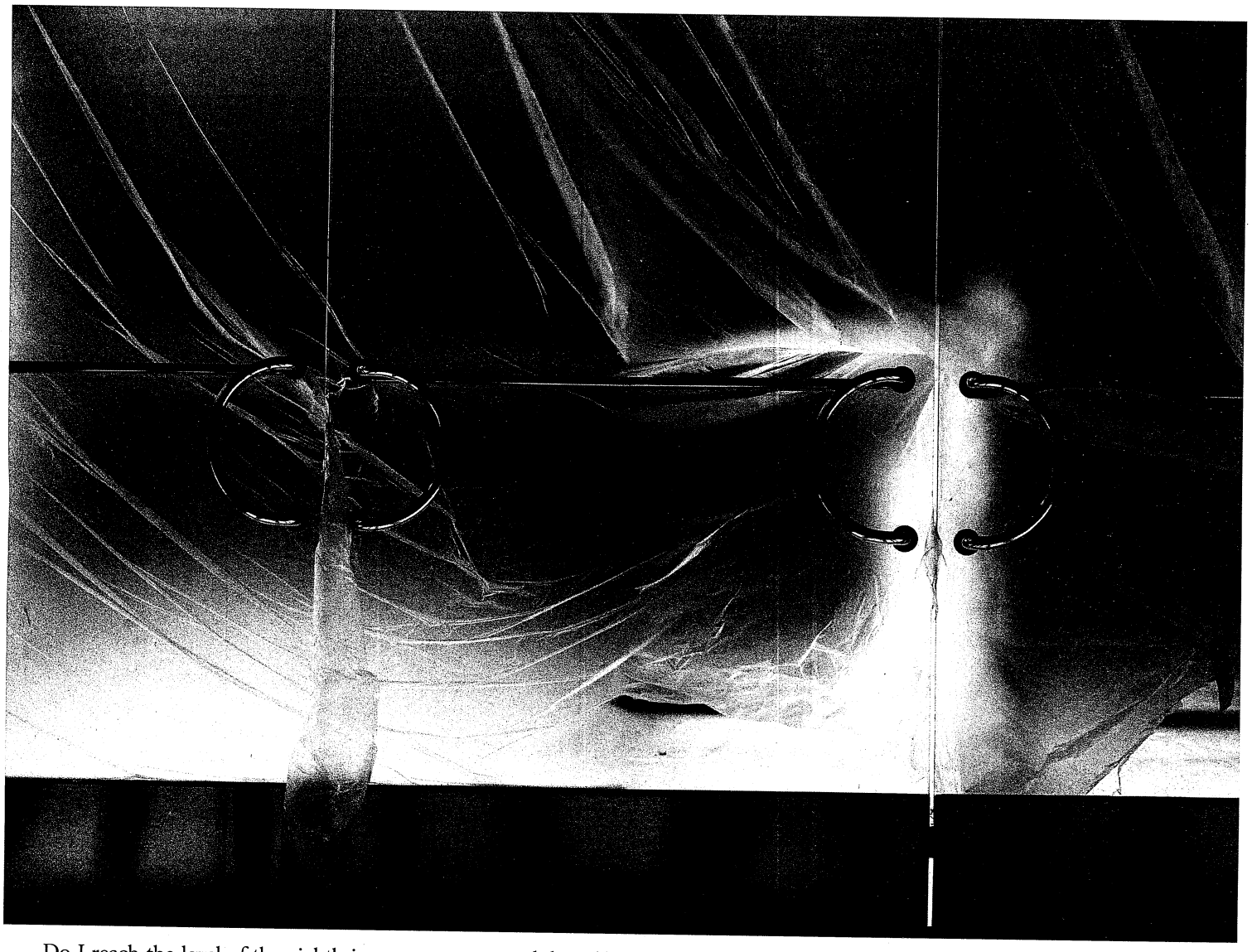
I settled down after getting my PhD. I was building a practice; I was *beginning to ride the ox.* I was coming home tired at the end of a long productive day with patients' checks in my pocket. Riding high!

I think an important turning point in my practice was when I could begin to make better and less self-conscious use of my own experience and associations. (I was reading the relational analysts who supported a mindful sharing – one a little freer from the worry about violations of neutrality and countertransference contaminations.) I could get more creative, make better use of my own intelligence and artfulness (for want of a better word). I could refer in session to books, to poetry I'd read, to experiences I had had. Probably this corresponds to *the sixth image: a creative playfulness in the work.* I should add, this turn was also reflected in the poetry I was writing. While I had been writing poetry most

of my adult life, now I found that I was writing poems that were, to my welcome surprise, actually getting published – that is, that had meaning and resonance for other people.

Somewhere in this process, both in my teaching and in my practice – and in my poetry – I found myself saying things I didn't know I knew! And when I heard them, I thought if I had been the one listening, I would have learned something! *I think this is as close as I come to the seventh ox herding image:* a kind of transcendence in which what is spoken is not derived but emerges – somehow, out of what feels like the ground of one's sensibility – or shared sensibility.

Peter Baker



Do I reach the level of the eighth image? Probably not. But maybe close at those rare moments when an insight seems to wipe away everything but the insight itself. I have had those – briefly. Usually about distressing and painful concerns that have been plaguing *me.* Do I offer the opportunity to have such insights to my patients? I certainly hope so.

Lin's Comment

My view: the path of becoming a psychotherapist is a Chan path, a path of walking through what is called in Chan tradition "the gateless barrier."

To start with my initial awareness: my interest in clinical psychology started early – during my years as a Taiwanese teenager growing up in Flushing, New York, where I encountered a book (written in Chinese), *Comfort arrives when your mind is clear* 清心與自在: 佛法的心理學分析, written by Cheng (1985), a Taiwanese psychologist who investigated the relationship between Buddhism and Western psychotherapy. That book kindled my interest in learning more about both Buddhism and Western psychology – and especially about the common ground shared by Eastern and Western wisdom traditions. As an immigrant, I often searched for commonality between two cultures, a search that was part of my own acculturation process. This interest would reflect the *first ox herding* image.

My interest in psychotherapy and Buddhism continued through high school to college. In high school, I was a fine arts major. Arts were viewed as an expression and path towards one's inner world. There was an intuitive feeling that art, Buddhism, and Western psychology all have something in common.

In college, I signed up for and was trained as a peer advisor. We had weekly supervision with clinical psychologists on our work with students in the counseling office. I was fortunate to take several courses on counseling skills and had a chance to supervise the junior peer advisors by listening to their actual interview tapes and conducting role play with them. The clients we served were students who had issues with campus life such as problems with registration. However, we were trained to recognize that the initial problems are not always the real problem. I still remember very well my first case. This was a girl who had difficulty in selecting her major, but eventually we had a long conversation about her Lyme disease and how she viewed herself as a victim of the world. Thinking of herself as a victim was her problem. This initial contact with a therapy experience would reflect the *second image – seeing the hoof print of the ox.*

Fortunately, I was able to continue my interest in graduate school. As a graduate student, I was bombarded with different styles of psychotherapy. There were always questions: "How can I be a good therapist?" and "Which is the best style of therapy?"

Who should I be? A little Freud, a little Ellis? or a little Rogers?

In graduate school, I think I worked extra hard compared to my classmates; I would work at least two or even three externships at the same time. My primary recreational activity was visiting Barnes & Noble to read about psychotherapy. The books that usually drew my attention were books for beginning psychologists, such as Yalom's *The Gift of Therapy: An Open Letter to a New Generation of Therapists and Their Patients* (2003).

Part of the challenge was that I also had many different clinical supervisors and they were all very comfortable with their own clinical orientations – be it cognitive behavioral, psychodynamic, or some other approach. It was somewhat confusing to figure out what psychotherapy is when there were different opinions. I also noticed that some supervisors were better than others, despite their orientations. It seemed as if some "got it" and some "didn't."

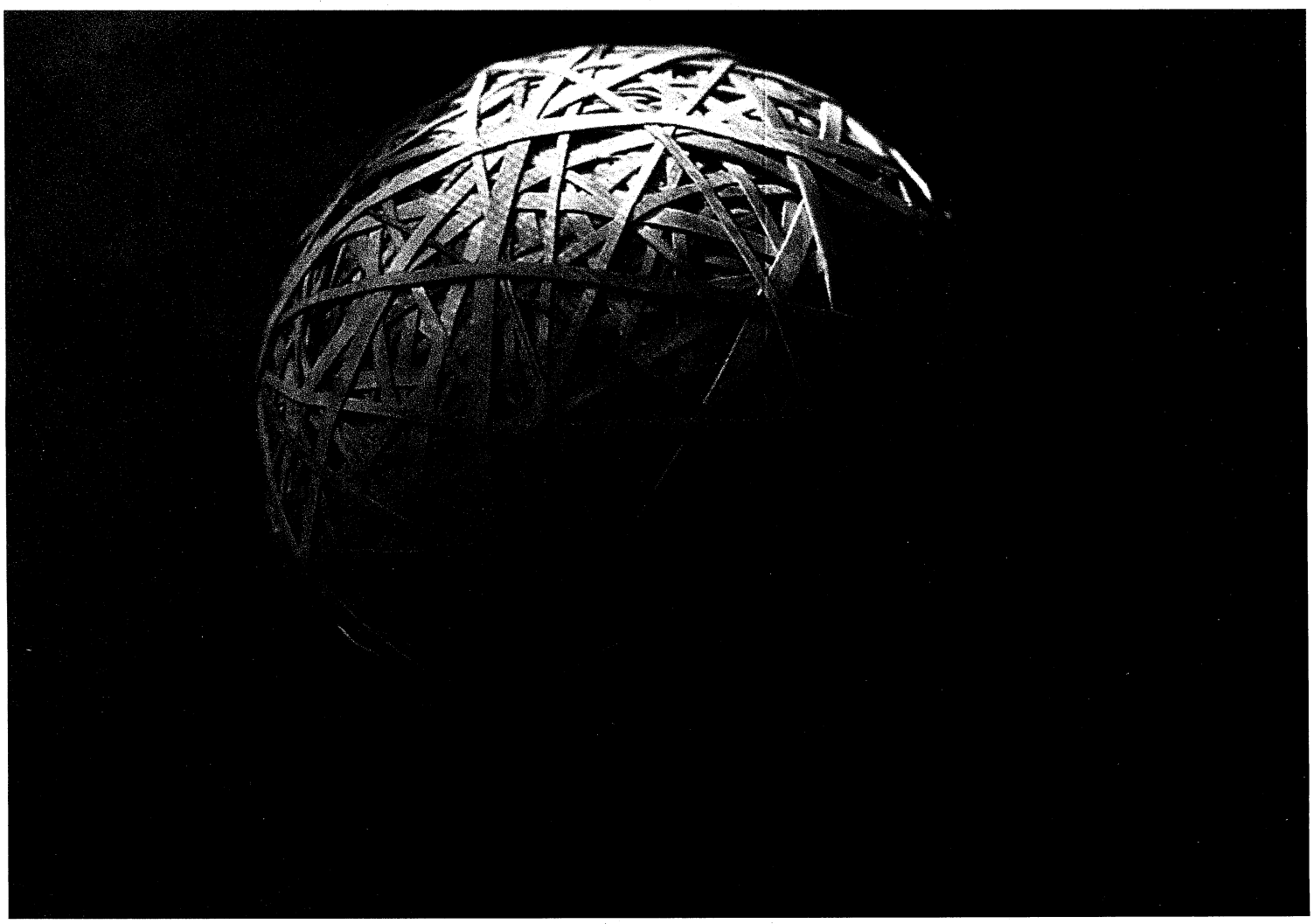
Chan (the predecessor of the Zen tradition) started as a response to scholastic Buddhism in the early 5th century. Influential clerics and elites were more interested in clarifying and classifying the teachings than in experiencing the practice (Guo Gu, 2012). Those who started the Chan approach could be said to be the ones who "got it." Similarly, with respect to the current state of clinical psychology, psychotherapy researchers and practicing clinicians may have very different ideas about what healing actually entails.

For example, I had a behavioral supervisor who was a good clinician. In my training, I had shadowed his therapy sessions, sitting right next to him very frequently. The surprising part was that I did not get to observe his "manualized behavioral techniques" much. Most of the time, he was creating a healing relationship and helping his patients to see their blind spots. I still remember what he told me: "the student I wish to work with (he meant me) is a person who is familiar with behavioral techniques but has a strong psychodynamic understanding of a person." During my graduate school years, my therapy skills were not developed, yet my motivation to be a good therapist was strong, and my career path as a clinician was established. This would reflect the *third image: perceiving the ox.*

As I continued on my career path, I started to develop the ability to distinguish the strengths and weaknesses of each orientation. Given the exposure I had to different well-established clinicians, I also developed a better idea of what a good supervisor should be. For example, during my fellowship years, I had one supervisor who was an expert in Interpersonal Psychotherapy. Another supervisor was a close disciple of Lazarus. In addition, I had several supervisors who were either trained by Beck or psychoanalytically trained. Furthermore, I was fortunate to attend a weekly workshop provided by Otto Kernberg and dyadic workshops led by Jeffrey Young. However, I have reconnected with my current supervisor, Henry Seiden, because I could see that he "got it."

Seiden was my first clinical supervisor. When I first met him, I was not well informed enough to understand his clinical skills. Many years later, after I graduated from my doctoral program, we reconnected because I started to recognize what I needed in order to have good training.

Tim Maul



One main developmental achievement in working with Seiden, and one that he has encouraged, has been the emphasis on the integration of my original interest in Chan with a psychodynamic approach. My need to be a "Little Freud" has been replaced with a sense of being comfortable with who I am as a therapist. *The ox is caught.* There is still a lot of room for improvement in terms of my clinical skills. However, I have a clear sense of what can work – for me – in creating my own style. The burden of "I have to

be a good therapist" is less. Personally, I am currently in this stage.

My Chan practice has helped me to explore the common ground between different healing arts. As an immigrant who came to this country alone at a young age, I am familiar with what it is to be a person who has one foot in two worlds; not just one foot in two different cultures, but also one foot in multiple therapeutic traditions. In over ten years of private practice, I am grateful to have worked with clients who either had many years of analysis or many years of Chan practice before they came to me. They helped me to become more aware of the strengths and weaknesses of each tradition. These patients also helped me to be a therapist who can integrate the best from both traditions.

Knowing the path is still different from walking the path. Part of my future is to continue learning and sharpening my clinical technique. This will come with time, clinical experience, and good supervision. Ideally, my Chan training will integrate with my clinical skills more seamlessly. When one has excellent clinical skills, *the ox is tamed.*

Riding the ox home is the professional ideal. This is where one is transformed from a technician to an artist. In this stage, the clinician has developed his own personal style and is respected by professional peers. Models, for me, of practitioners who have *ridden the ox home* would be Irving Yalom or Stephen Mitchell. Although I am not there yet, I do have a sense that my personal style will be the style of Chan psychoanalysis. It is rare to have an analyst who is trained in both psychoanalysis and in Chan. Riding the ox home for me would be to be a therapist who is respected in both Buddhist and psychodynamic communities.

Becoming a great artist is an achievement that most of us may not reach in this lifetime. However, there is still room to grow and transcend. If the therapist can reflect and realize that this career path is also a spiritual path, it will be taking one step further. At this stage, the therapist is no longer concerned about "being a great therapist." Being a therapist has become a tool for personal and spiritual exploration. In other words, *the ox can be transcended.* Personally, at times I feel that practicing as a therapist has helped me to explore different aspects of my self, which also strengthens my personal Chan practice. This is where self-actualization begins – as Jung described. The hallmark of this process is where the difference between "the dancer and the dance" dissolves. Dancer and the dance become one. The career path and spiritual path become one.

The *eighth ox herding image* represents enlightenment in the Chan tradition. Often, enlightenment happens in daily life when the mind is unified, where the unification or transcendence experience in the previous stage has been shattered. I think of the folk tale of the ugly duckling as an example. In stage 7, the dancing ugly duckling has become one with her dance. In enlightenment, the ugly duckling has a powerful insight in realizing that she is not the ugly duckling. This is an experience that is beyond words and description. In Chan, this is the realization that our usual self-referential way (or dualistic way) of seeing the world can be dropped. In therapy sessions, the concepts and boundaries of therapist, client, and psychotherapy are all dissolved. This may be difficult to understand for readers. However, it is precisely the difficulty of understanding this state of mind that makes the awakening experience indescribable.

Important to note, in the Chan tradition, the initial enlightenment experience becomes the second or third experience again. You see the "hoof print" or the ox (again) for the very first time. The sequence of ten images is a reminder that the quest for enlightenment never ends.[3]

There is a common saying in Chan: "[A]t first, we see the mountains as mountains, then the mountains are not seen as mountains. Finally, we see mountains as mountains." *Returning to the source* describes this process. The world and reality are still the same, but we do not interact with them from a self-referential perspective. As one master said, "after the ecstasy, there is still laundry" (Kornfield, 2001).

Finally, in Chan perspective, a major purpose of the spiritual path is to benefit others around you. The function of insight is empathy and kindness towards oneself and others. What's the use of enlightenment if it only benefits oneself? The final picture, *Entering the City with Bliss-Bestowing Hands,* represents the ideal of my spirituality.

My Chan teacher, Master Sheng-Yen (2001), warns that the correct way of using the ox-herding pictures is not to wait until stage 10 to help others. That would be a selfish path. We use these images as an ideal that guides our behaviors and actions. Even though I am not enlightened, I still can move towards and adopt this ideal in my life. In other words, I can strive to be a good psychotherapist not just with my couch, but as a person who can help others outside of my office. As an example, I regularly participate in disaster relief as a photojournalist, which I regard as an art.

The *eighth ox herding image* represents enlightenment or awakening [*satori,* in Japanese] in the Zen tradition. Zen practitioners have expressed this experience in a variety of art forms. Often, enlightenment is said to happen in daily life when the mind is unified, where the unification or transcendence experience in the previous stage has been shattered. In the state of unification, the mind is vast, clear and receptive. At this moment, anything can potentially serve as medium for awakening, such as the sound of the bell, the hand gesture of the master, or a shooting star in the sky (as in Siddhartha's case).

Basho, the well-known haiku poet and Zen adept, is thought to have expressed his awakening through his poems. His famous frog haiku not only represented the highest art form, but also described an experience of awakening.

The old pond!
A frog jumps in,
The sound of the water!

The 17th century Zen monk Sengai expressed his version of the frog haiku (Bobrow, 2010)

The old pond!
Basho jumps in,
The sound of the water! (p.15)

As a volunteer, I have witnessed many sufferings in many places in this world. I have found that one helpful thing for the survivors is demonstrating your understanding. I remember one time I had a conversation with a woman who worried about her daughter's behavior after an earthquake in Ecuador. Originally, her main worry was that she did not have help with calming and soothing her child. Eventually we both learned that she had been spoiling her daughter – and that the source of her anxiety was her own abusive childhood. As a therapist, we can bring the "ah-ha" moment to people in or outside of our office. There is no need to see one's self only as a "therapist." There is only simply the act of helping, as the right hand naturally helps the left hand.

Fried's Comment

Unlike Henry Seiden and Peter Lin, my path to any mastery or enlightenment has been through immersion in what one might call "the destructive element." My self-involvement took me to some places a psychoanalyst should not find himself, and almost left me there. Some better angel of my nature eventually reached me with a rescuing hand. Today, I feel I am helpful to almost every person I see, in every session. It took me a long time and much travail to be able to do that.

When I was younger, I wanted to be a bullfighter! Quite literally. I spent some

3. The Zen tradition may have–and seems – sometimes to lean towards the formulation and presentation of discrete stages. This is likely in part heuristic: a way of teaching students, of helping them then pass the learning along (see Lin and Seiden, 2015a, 2015b).

serious time in my late adolescence training to be a torero on a ranch in Mexico, pursuing an adolescent dream. To say the least, I was not successful.

To return to the metaphor: my ox gored me repeatedly because I was trying to kill him.

About a year ago, a patient I'd been seeing told me, at the start of a session, that it would be his last. I was not surprised: he'd been negotiating a steep gradient of withdrawal for several weeks. He asked me what one does in a final session. I replied that there is no formula, that he might do whatever he wished. He said, "I think I'll lie on the couch and see what comes to mind." After a few supine seconds, he began to ask me personal questions. I asked what the answers might do for him. "I think they would help me to remember you better," he said.

As the end of the session approached, he asked whether he might tell me a *midrash* (in the Jewish tradition, a tale with a moral). I encouraged him to tell it. He proceeded. "A rabbi and his wife had just finished having a very satisfying intercourse on a Friday night, and were enjoying their post-coital languor, when suddenly they heard a noise that seemed to be coming from under the bed. The rabbi stooped to investigate and was astonished to see his student, Moishe, concealed there. 'Moishe!' he exclaimed, 'What are *you* doing here?' 'Rabbi, I hope you will forgive me, but I know nothing about sex and, since you are my teacher, I assumed I could learn from you.'" Here, the patient paused. The time was almost up. I said, "There are two salient aspects of the midrash that I'd like merely to mention before we stop. First, I think that Moishe probably felt more comfortable under the rabbi's bed than under his parents'. Second, I regard it as very significant that the student's name was Moishe, the namesake of Moses who led the Israelites to the Exodus, because the Lord did not vouchsafe *that* Moses to enter the Promised Land, but only to view it from a distance." Thereupon, the patient rose from the couch, smiled ruefully, shook my hand, and left without another word.

Approximately a year later, I received a call from him. He asked whether we might meet for one session so that he could bring me up-to-date on his life. I agreed. We were pleased to see each other on the appointed day. He shared as much as he could within the limits of a single session. Again, he asked me a number of personal questions. Among them, the most relevant in the current context was "What have you found to be indispensable to helping people grow, in your practice as a therapist/analyst?" With scarcely any hesitation, I replied, "The experience of being understood."

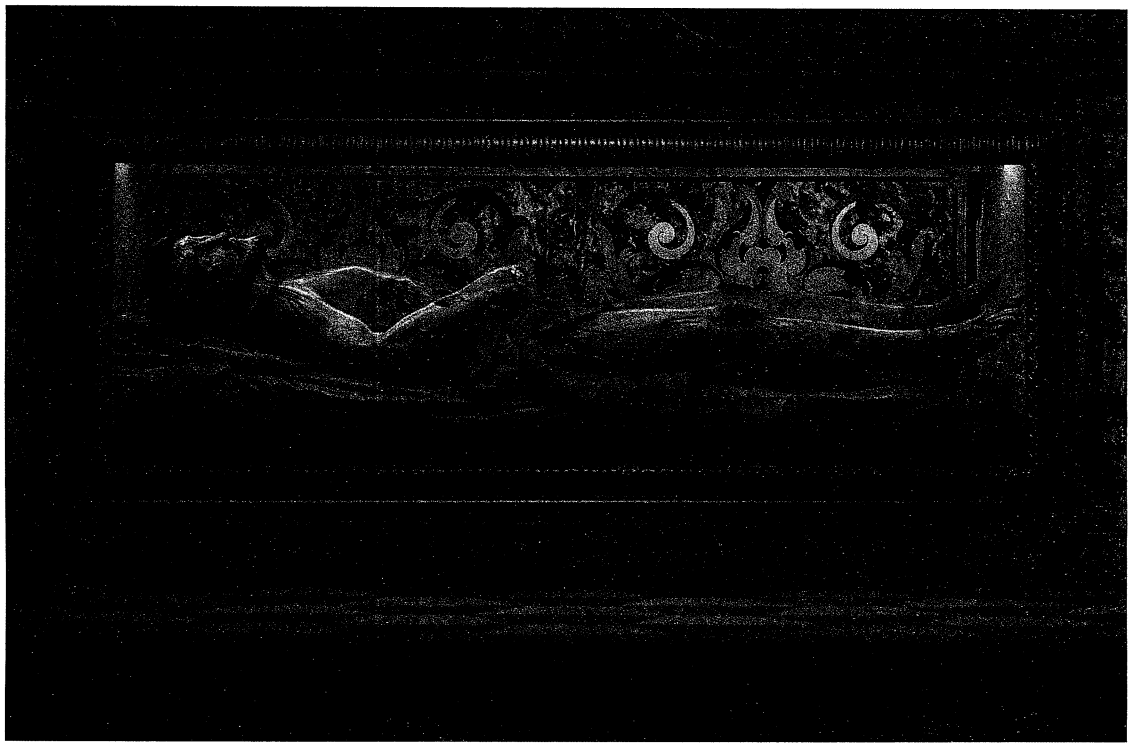
The account of this session is a link to the divergence of my development as a practitioner from those of Henry Seiden and Peter Lin. I think it took me much longer to divest myself of myself than it took them, partly because they became far more serious about their calling a lot earlier than I did, a calling which, like the first image of the ox herding sequence, I knew was there but hadn't really yet seen. My fallacious assumption was that a psychological healer must be charismatic. By that, I mean that he or she must be so persuasive, verbally, in demeanor, movement, gesture, and style, as to override all resistance to change. Such a belief results in the reduction of patients to the status of minor characters in the illustrious narrative of the practitioner's career.

For many years, I struggled against the conviction that what I had to say was so smart, so beautifully phrased, so much apropos, and so profound, that to withhold it from the patient would have been a shame. Gradually, and almost imperceptibly, some element of my mind became free to discern how fraught these inclinations were with the need to be admired. Each session conflated my needs and those of the patient. Had I allowed it, I'd have thought, "If I had to prevent myself from acting this way, I'd be nullifying my primary reason for becoming a therapist." This was a glimpse of the second and perhaps of the third image: the footprint, the tail; no grasping of the ox yet.

Most remarkable is that many patients tolerated and even accepted my performance. Even more astonishing was that I almost always received praise and approval from my supervisors, both at the graduate level and in the institute where I was trained in psychoanalysis. The only explanation I have for this is that the conjunction of my glibness and their eagerness for my success blinded them to what I was doing in the consulting room. Perhaps this corresponds to the fourth image: catching the ox, looking like a psychoanalyst, but not having any true appreciation of the art.

What I was doing bore a greater resemblance to bullfighting than to ox herding! The descriptors of the charisma to which I aspired: "persuasive in demeanor, movement, gesture, style," are appropriate to a man in a suit of lights, controlling the charge of a wild animal by means of a cloth that he brandishes with consummate grace, as a prelude to killing it with a sword thrust. I could imagine each patient's id as the beast, a locus of violent, powerful impulses that my charisma would control, and my rapier-like interpretations, dispatch.

Bill Beckley, *The Savior*



My first attempts to control the ravening beast *within me* that would accept nothing less than total capitulation to its will, were mechanical. I should say I did see some slight virtue in paying attention to my patients, if only as a concession to commonplaces of our profession. It was useful to listen long enough and closely enough to acquire material for my interpretations. Here, again, is an analogy with bullfighting. Before stepping into the ring himself, the matador spends a few seconds observing how the bull behaves when pursuing one of his assistants. In this tiny interval, the most expert bullfighter can learn everything he needs to know to create a virtuosic performance with the bull. And my goal, it must be said, was nothing less than a virtuosic performance.

The gorings I suffered by conducting myself in this way consisted of patients' terminating their treatment with me. But this didn't happen frequently enough, or with sufficient shock, to stir much more than myriad ingenious rationalizations of my failures. The great majority of my patients remained with me for years and sometimes decades before deciding to end their therapy in a manner that most often appeared to me inconclusive, though they might, if asked, have thought otherwise. Perhaps the dissonance between the time and effort they'd expended and an indifferent outcome led them to ascribe greater value to their experience with me than it deserved. But, in saying this, we enter the labyrinthine space of reciprocal perception, projection, and introjection that renders all such judgments as I am here attempting at least problematic, and at most, impossible. It suffices that *I* am able to estimate the degree to which my ability to listen, to attend closely and for uninterrupted intervals to what my patients were conveying, was probably not sufficient to contribute to their growth with any consistency.

An activity that proved useful to my gradual transition from bullfighter to ox herder was taking notes at the end of each session. Doing so, I began to see with increasing clarity the parts of the session where my attention had become diverted from the patient's communication to my own inner promptings. To remember something, you must first perceive it. Variable perception contributes to unreliable remembering. Trying to reproduce a recent experience in as much detail and as faithfully as possible may, if one is conscientious enough, reveal how much one has missed. I was often appalled at the gaps in my recall. I think I was beginning to "tame" the ox – as in the fifth image.

Taking these notes inevitably led me to think about the experiences I'd had with supervisors in graduate school, the institute where I trained as an analyst, and my years in a study group with a Kleinian analyst. In effect, I was comparing my self-supervision with that which I'd gotten institutionally and semi-institutionally. I asked myself how I'd managed to emerge from countless hours of tutelage, mentoring, mirroring, teaching, brow beating, hectoring, shaming, indoctrination, praise, admiration, indifference, and neglect relatively unscathed and uninfluenced, yet stamped with so many official and personal seals of approval. Could it be that no one cared enough to confront me with my deficiencies, or maybe that they felt it would be fruitless to try to take me beyond my inherent limits as a clinician and person?

In a somewhat different context (Fried, 2010), I wrote,

> *when the training of an analytic candidate is over, regardless of its specific methods and contents, there will remain a residue of beliefs about the analytic enterprise that has survived, unanalyzed, unsupervised and therefore unchallenged. This residue has been held in abeyance until it can be tested or merely implemented in the privacy of the analyst's newly-earned right to conduct his or her work unobserved. Should the operations to which the beliefs give rise, deviate sufficiently from received or traditional procedures, the practitioner may find it necessary to support them with an infrastructure of innovative theory. . . . This sequence is similar in some ways to the deliberate misreading of their literary forebears by poets struggling to assert their own originality that the critic Harold Bloom (1973, 1997) has called "the anxiety of influence". . . . I am suggesting that theoretical and technical innovations in psychoanalysis are often impelled by unconscious ambitions, a striving for originality or some combination of the two. Such a proposition would lend weight to the argument that the practice of psychoanalysis lies closer to art than to science.*

Not surprisingly, I wrote papers about the effects of flagging attention in psychoanalysis, and the strategies practitioners of various persuasions use to cope with it. Generalizing from my personal experience, I became convinced that attending, failing to attend, remembering, and failing to remember, were the keys to therapeutic work. Perhaps this corresponds to moving from the fifth image, starting to get things right, and approaching the sixth: riding the ox home?

These deliberations were necessary, but not sufficient. It may be that I'd rediscovered something that many of my less self-involved colleagues had known from their professional and personal beginnings (and that adherents of Zen and other strains of Buddhism have known for eons).

The component that remained and remains elusive, however, was and is the one contained in my answer to the patient who returned to me for one session. I believe that the single indispensable element of therapeutic work, regardless of the practitioner's theory or orientation, is sustained attention, and that this can only be achieved by a suspension of the operations ordinarily used to leverage the self. This condition fulfilled, the patient will have an opportunity to feel known, comprehended, understood, and, in turn, *held* in the mind of another, a place of acceptance and safety where growth may be possible. I think this is the highest form of our therapeutic art.

As to the fusion of dancer and dance, I can only report that I feel it ever more frequently as a therapist and psychoanalyst, but almost always when I am composing photographs through the view finder of my camera. At those times, I cannot tell the camera from my eye, and I become oblivious to myself.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have examined an extended metaphor, now a thousand years old, but successively re-imagined and appreciated, drawn from a classical Chinese formulation and presented in images and poems and in master teachers' discourses. This, the "ox herding" metaphor, considers and outlines the stages involved in accomplishing Zen enlightenment. We take the metaphor in a non-religious sense to outline the stages involved in the mastery of any art. In Zen, this is the art of enlightenment. (We are well aware that for Zen practitioners such enlightenment is more than an art, indeed a personal transformation, and we mean no disrespect to that point of view.)

Our interest in the ox herding metaphor is that it appears to be a powerful analogy for the accomplishment of mastery in other arts. We take the practice of psychoanalytic psychotherapy to be one such art.

Some things the analogy brings out with respect to the practice of the art of psychoanalytic psychotherapy: *Notably, arriving at a capacity to understand their experience and communicate that understanding to our patients is the epitome of our art.* We hope that the authors' personal reports included here support and illustrate that and the following conclusions:

1. The process of arriving at mastery is a developmental struggle.

2. A dedication to continuing the struggle throughout a lifetime of practice is essential.

3. An expertise with respect to common learning is the beginning, but doesn't map the entire experience or achievement.

4. The process is a matter of the development of personhood. It is not simply the learning of a body of common knowledge. Although learning that common knowledge (including the underlying scientific knowledge, and, for psychoanalytic psychotherapists, psychoanalytic thought beginning with Freud) is a necessary condition, it is not sufficient to describe the full accomplishment.

5. The developmental struggle involves much work, much disappointment, and moments of failure and of re-dedication.

6. The moments of progress are largely unpredictable. Courses can be passed on time; certificates awarded; but essential progress, because it is a developmental achievement, may be uneven and may occur in surprising ways and at surprising times.

7. Often these moments follow on or are part of striking and disillusioning, even humiliating, setbacks.

8. The art of psychotherapy, like any, involves the development of a unique creativity. One artist is never just like another, even if of the same "school" – that is, sharing the same precepts and assumptions. (Anyone seriously considering making a referral knows how much thought goes into considering the individuality of the person being referred to.)

9. Talent is an inescapable element of the practice of any art. Not less so in this one. There is no such thing as a journeyman practitioner. There is no value to craft without art.

10. Finally, the mastery arrived at is located *within* the practitioner. This conclusion cannot be overstated. In its highest form (which, again, the authors hasten to say they aspire to – but make no claim to having achieved), art transcends technique. Surely it borrows on technique and on a shared learning tradition (of which psychological science as well as psychoanalytic thought are components), but it is more than that. It is the personal mastery of the practitioner.

In the Zen tradition, the highest artistic performance goes well beyond technique. It is seen as an expression of spirituality, enlightenment, or transcendence. Some examples: the Zen garden is an accomplished expression of awakening as well as an environment to induce awakening. In the martial arts (another Zen practice), a great teacher said, "There is no best martial art, there is only best martial artist." ∎

REFERENCES

Bobrow, J. (2010). *Zen and psychotherapy: Partners in liberation.* New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.

Bloom, H. (1973, 1997). *The anxiety of influence: A theory of poetry.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Cheng, S. Y. (1985). *Comfort arrives when your mind is clear* (清心與自在: 佛法的心理學分析). Taipei, Taiwan: Yuan-Liou Publishing Co.

Fried, W. (2010). Transference as a device for facilitating attention. *Psychoanalytic Review, 97*(3), 483-493.

Guo Gu. (2012). *The essence of Chan: A practical guide to life and practice according to the teachings of Bodhidharma.* Boulder, CO: Shambhala Publications.

Isaacson, W. (2017). *Leonardo Da Vinci.* New York, NY: Simon & Shuster.

Koller, J. M. (2004). *Ox-herding: Stages of Zen practice.* In Expanding East Asian Studies (ExEAS), Teaching Material and Resources, Columbia University. Retrieved from http://www.columbia.edu/cu/weai/exeas/resources/pdf/oxherding.pdf.

Kornfield, J. (2001). *After the ecstasy, the laundry: How the heart grows wise on the spiritual path.* New York, NY: Bantam.

Lin, P., & Seiden, H. M. (2015a). Mindfulness and psychoanalytic psychotherapy: A clinical convergence. *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, 32*(2), 321–333.

Lin, P., & Seiden, H. M. (2015b). Parallel algorithms in Zen and psychoanalytic psychotherapy. *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association, 63*(4), NP5-NP10.

Magid, B. (2013). *Nothing is hidden: The psychology of Zen koans.* Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications.

McCay, D. (2017, November 28). Clinical practice guidelines [Blog post]. *Psychology Today.* Retrieved from https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/your-fears-and-anxieties/201711/clinical-practice-guidelines

Mazur, B. (2017). Brutalist medicine: A reflection on the architecture of healthcare. *BMJ, 359*, j5676.

Rogers, C. (1961). *On becoming a person.* New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.

Seiden, H. M., & Fried, K. W. (2015). W. B. Yeats: "Where love has pitched his mansion…." *DIVISION/Review, 13*, 50-51.

Shedler, J. (2013a). Recognition of psychotherapy effectiveness. *Psychotherapy, 50*, 102-109.

Shedler, J. (2013b, October 31). Bamboozled by bad science: The first myth about "evidence-based" therapy [Blog post]. Retrieved from http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/psychologically-minded/201310/bamboozled-bad-science

Shedler, J. (2017, November 19). Selling bad therapy to trauma victims [Blog post]. *Psychology Today.* Retrieved from https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/psychologically-minded/201711/selling-bad-therapy-trauma-victims

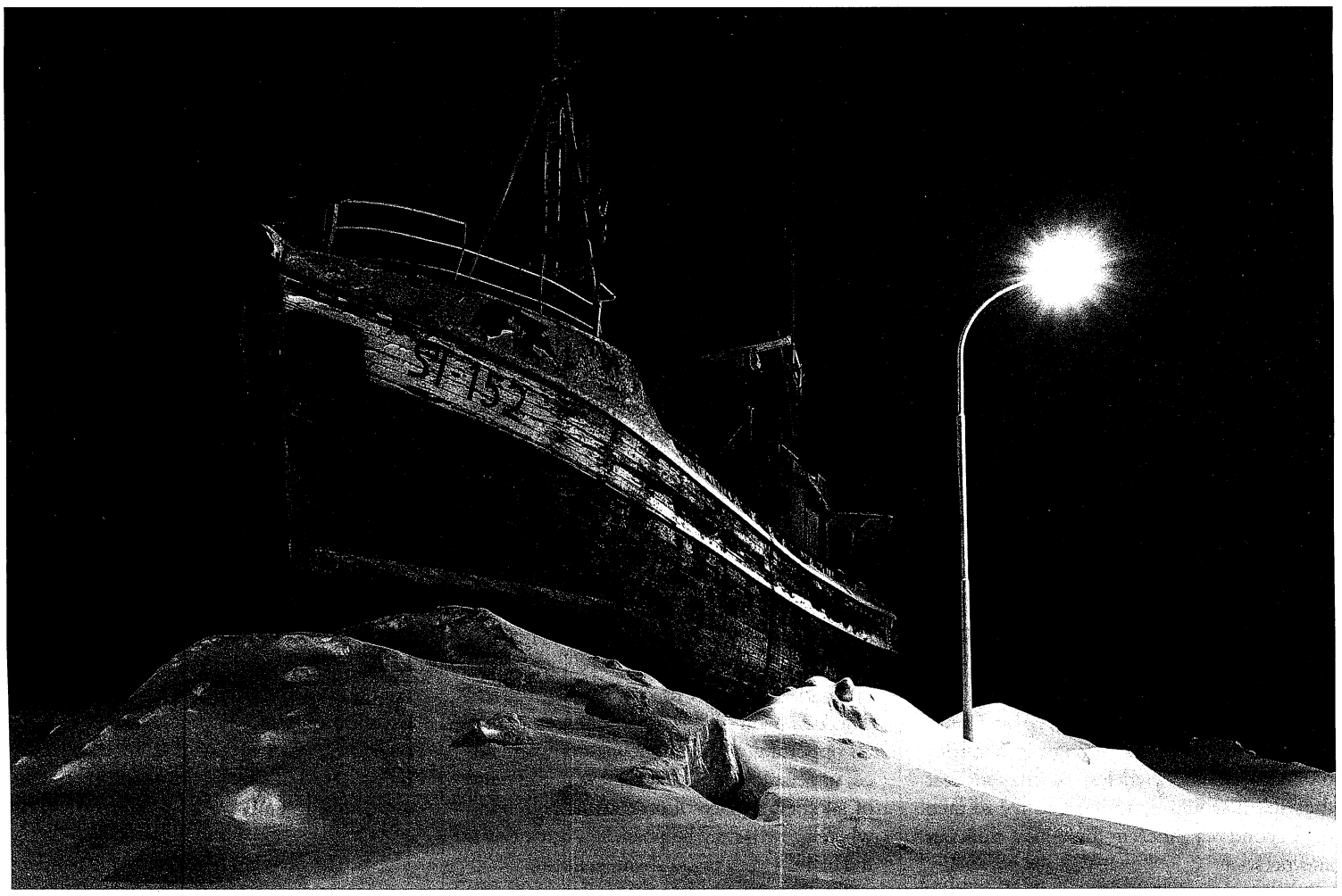
Sheng-Yen. (2014). Enlightenment and the ten ox herding pictures. *Chan Magazine, 34*(3), 4-16.

Sheng-Yen & Stevenson, D. (2001). *Hoofprint of the ox.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Suzuki, D. T. (1934). *Manual of Zen Buddhism.* Reprinted by Amazon Digital Services, 2001.

Watts, A. (1936). *The spirit of Zen: A way of life, work and art in the Far East.* New York, NY: E. P. Dutton.

Yalom, I. (2003). *The gift of therapy: An open letter to a new generation of therapists and their patients.* New York, NY: Harper Perennial.



Björn Valdimarsson, *Fishing boat Daniel*

DIVISION|REVIEW
American Psychological Assoc.
750 First Street, NE
Washington D.C. 20002-4242

Forwarding Services Requested

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Sergio Benvenuto is a researcher in psychology and philosophy at the National Research Council (CNR) in Rome, Italy, and a psychoanalyst, president of ISAP (Institute for Advanced Studies in Psychoanalysis). He is a contributor to cultural journals such as *Telos, Lettre Internationale* (French, Spanish, Hungarian, Rumanian, German and Italian editions), Texte, *RISS, Journal for Lacanian Studies,* L'évolution psychiatrique. He has translated into Italian Jacques Lacan's *Séminaire XX:Encore.*).

J. Todd Dean is a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst in St. Louis, MO, and a founding member of the St. Louis Lacan Study Group.

Morris Eagle is professor emeritus, Derner Institute of Advanced Psychological Studies, Adelphi University. He is a former president of the Division of Psychoanalysis, American Psychological Association. He is the author of *Recent Developments in Psychoanalysis: A Critical Evaluation* among other books and articles

William Fried is a clinical psychologist and psychoanalyst in addition to a photographer. For 27 years, he served as Associate Director of Psychiatry Residency Training at Maimonides Medical Center. In 2000, he received the Teacher of the Year Award from the Association for Academic Psychiatry, the first non-physician to be so honored. He is the author of *Critical Flicker Fusion.* And practices psychoanalysis and psychotherapy in Manhattan.

Michael Krass is a psychoanalyst in Falls Church, VA and Washington, DC who has worked clinically with children and adolescents and their parents, as well as with adults for the past 30 years. He is also an Assistant Clinical Professor at the George Washington University. He is a training and supervising analyst at and teaches in the Contemporary Freudian Society-Psychoanalytic Training Institute and has also taught in the CFS Contemporary Trends Program, at Johns Hopkins University and the Washington School of Psychiatry.

Joanna Lhulier is in private practice in Chevy Chase, Md. She is a licensed psychologist in Maryland and the District of Columbia and works with patients with a wide variety of challenges including eating disorders, mood disorders (depression and anxiety), relationship issues, parenting children with special needs, and loss.

Peter Lin is a licensed Psychologist who specialized in mood and anxiety disorders, as well as relationship issues. Peter Lin has great interest in the integration of Eastern Buddhism and Western psychotherapy. He has years of training in Chan (Chinese Zen) practice and is currently a Dharma teacher-in training at Dharma Drum Mountain Chan Lineage. He is also actively involved in disaster relief and is part of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation

Gemma Marangoni Ainslie is a psychologist-psychoanalyst practicing in Austin, Texas. She received her doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and is certified in psychoanalysis by the American Board of Professional Psychology. Dr. Ainslie has presented nationally and internationally on a wide variety of subjects in psychoanalysis, including gender, dreams, and psychoanalysis and film. She is Book Review Editor at DIVISION/Review.

Dinah Mendes is a psychologist and psychoanalyst in practice in New York City. She is a member of and supervisor at IPTAR and enjoys writing on general topics from a psychoanalytically informed perspective.

Gregory Novie is in private practice in Phoenix, Arizona, and has written articles and book reviews on topics such as countertransference, borderline states, Lacanian concepts in clinical practice, and trauma. Dr. Novie completed his PhD at Arizona State University and his analytic training at the Southwest Center for Psychoanalytic Studies.

Henry Seiden was a psychologist, psychoanalyst and poet. Author of The Motive for Metaphor: Brief Essays on Poetry and Psychoanalysis (2015), among other books and articles. He was the Poetry Editor of DIVISION/Review.