

LAMENTATION OF AN AGING WARRIOR: *JAPA* 2003–2011

As current editor of *JAPA*, I have had the role of guiding APsaA's scholarly journal through a period of challenge to all things psychoanalytic. *JAPA* has responded with format changes, new ventures, a broadening of theoretical allegiances on its editorial board, and other innovations designed to keep psychoanalytic scholarship current, responsive to adjacent disciplines, and welcoming of new talent and new perspectives. In this essay I will offer my take on what is new and important, what is old and still important, where *JAPA* has been and where it needs to go. A mix of celebration and manifesto, it is meant to convey the joys and challenges of psychoanalytic scholarship that make editing *JAPA* the fantastic experience it is.

On assuming the editorship in 2003, what quickly became apparent to me was that all my "good," forward-looking ideas had origins in the work of the editors who preceded me at the helm of *JAPA* (see Blum 2011; Shapiro 2011; Richards 2011). Putting my stamp on the journal meant further developing ideas my predecessors had already introduced. That there are few truly new ideas is not only tempering of my ambitions, but is pertinent to considering the value of manuscripts not solely in relation to their novelty. Psychoanalysis is a conservative enterprise. Our knowledge is hard-won and requires constant defense against a public and a scientific community ever ready to dismiss what Freud referred to as his unsavory ideas. There are pieces that describe the already well known but do so in contemporary and compelling ways that deserve to be read and thought about. Fashions within psychoanalysis certainly change. The other day, a somewhat obsessional patient of mine was telling me about a carefully disguised struggle he was having with a colleague in his workplace. He characteristically spoke in a halting, overmethodical way, with frequent throat clearings, subliminal grunts and groans. There were subtle connections to contentious issues about which he and I periodically tangled. I thought to comment to him about the pleasure he must derive in the manipulation of the fecal column in his rectum as he presses

for releasing or withholding his thoughts in the session. I reflected that no one, perhaps with the exception of child analysts working with encopretic and constipated children, makes such interpretations today, despite widespread admiration among analysts for Abraham's now century-old characterology of anality. We have packaged our understanding in new ways, and we at *JAPA* must do likewise without losing our moorings. It is here that papers with an historical bent do our discipline a major service in keeping our perhaps unfashionable older ideas available for reappraisal and translation.

In spelling out the last decade's trends in *JAPA*, what first comes to mind is the exploration of changing perspectives on the clinical role of interpretation and the "something more than interpretation" in contemporary analytic technique (Boston Change Process Study Group 2005). To be sure, this subject has a long history with regard to the question of the centrality of interpretation and insight in effecting analytic change. From Freud forward, the suggestive and relational factors in therapeutics have been with us as a subject about which considerable ink and psychoanalytic institutional blood has been spilled. The contemporary dialogue has focused on the emergent quality of knowledge in the analytic situation, its co-construction by analyst and patient, the shrinking role of language in analytic work (Vivona 2006), and even whether developing understanding is particularly important for analysands (Fink 2010). A counterpoint to these trends is renewed appreciation for Loewald's integrative emphasis on the inseparability of language and the relational, both during development and in the analytic encounter (Vivona 2006).

Interest in neuroscience by psychoanalysts has grown in recent years as more complex mental functions have become the subject of neurobiological research. *JAPA* has focused especially on empathy (Aragno 2008; Goldberg 2011) and has highlighted the discovery and elaboration of the function of the mirror neuron system in macaque monkeys (Gallese, Eagle, and Migone 2007) and the potential role of this system in human empathy (Gallese 2008) and the psychoanalytic "knowing" of another. Enthusiasm, as well as caution about not overreading these interesting findings (Vivona 2009b), has characterized the discussion of this subject and the related issues of embodied simulation (Vivona 2009a) and interpersonal attunement (Fonagy and Target 2007). The mind/brain divide remains a focus of psychoanalytic discourse and is reflected in the bridging ideas put forward in recent contributions in *JAPA*.

One domain requiring such bridging ideas concerns the use of psychotropic medication concomitant with conducting psychoanalysis. In a series of papers in *JAPA*, authors have reported on how frequently such treatment modalities are combined and have investigated both the difficulties that may arise and the advantages that may accrue (Glick and Roose 2006; Gottlieb 2006). There are strong differences of opinion about whether a psychoanalyst can simultaneously function as a psychopharmacologist or whether, if combined treatment is felt to be warranted, the prescribing should be left to someone other than the treating analyst. Ways in which medications become “psychologized” (Tutter 2009) and enter into the therapeutic dialogue have been reported, as well as their impact on both participants in the analytic dyad. What is clear is that such combined treatment is increasingly common and requires careful scholarly consideration and a place in our educational programs.

One of the drawbacks of an increasingly pluralistic psychoanalytic world is the isolation of theoretical schools that occurs, at least partly, through the proliferation of theoretically “bound” journals. *JAPA* has in recent years published a series of papers that have highlighted contributions from clinical and theoretical perspectives largely unfamiliar to its North American readership. For example, papers from a Lacanian perspective have addressed the concept of *l’objet petit a* (Kirshner 2005), have explored the idea of “lack” (Wilson 2006; Ruti 2008), and have examined singularity in relation to Lacanian notions of the symbolic, imaginary, and real domains of experience (Ruti 2010). From a Lacanian clinical perspective, the importance of understanding and insight has been critically examined (Fink 2010). Easy to dismiss due to their unfamiliar terminology and singularly idiomatic expository style, Lacanian ideas are increasingly important in academic circles and have much to contribute to clinical work and thus reward careful study. Likewise, the ideas of Bion, Green, Winnicott and other theorists are now more regularly represented in our pages. In general, *JAPA* has developed a more international feel as the psychoanalytic world has become less nationally segmented.

Contributions in the clinical arena have been varied and have often centered on complex affective states such as revenge (Rosen 2007), forgiveness (Horwitz 2005; Schafer 2005; Lansky 2007), shame (Lansky 2005), and love (Friedman 2005). What has become increasingly characteristic of clinical papers is reporting on process material with the inclusion of details of the analyst’s inner experience contemporaneous with the patient’s associations and related communications. This undoubtedly

reflects the impact of intersubjectivity theory on psychoanalytic thinking and practice. Such “two-person” reporting has become an editorial expectation when clinical material is published. It supports Gabbard’s contention (1995) that countertransference, broadly defined, has become the clinical common ground across the different psychoanalytic “schools.”

Psychoanalysts have always had an ambivalent attitude toward empirical research. Particularly during Theodore Shapiro’s decade as editor, a significant attempt was made to publish research relevant to psychoanalytic theory and practice. Psychoanalysts have sometimes tended to view the subject matter of empirical research as trivial and unimportant and have insisted that each analytic treatment is so unique that research on a cohort of patients loses the specificity and subjectivity that are inherent in our work. This is, in my view, a short-sighted and naive perspective. There are many kinds of psychoanalytically relevant research that require thoughtful coordination with the specific questions asked. To dismiss research out of hand seriously impairs our ability to study our theories and practices and isolates us from other disciplines that expect empirical evidence for our ideas. With that in mind, *JAPA* now publishes research reports in an ongoing research section overseen by a specialized group of editorial readers experienced in research. Additionally, relevant research reports published elsewhere are summarized and reported in *JAPA*’s Journal Watch section, in order to connect our readers to developments in related disciplines that bear on subjects of interest and importance to psychoanalysts. Freud’s splendid isolation neither reflected his lack of interest in other domains of science nor is appropriate to a developed field of inquiry with more than a century of history. *JAPA*’s focus on research is aimed particularly at the next generation of analysts, whose commitment to science is hopefully less tainted by antiquated prejudice than has been true in the past. That these arguments remain active is illustrated in the current volume of *JAPA*, where Eagle and Wolitsky (2011) address the concerns of Hoffman (2009). Is empirical science “privileged”? Is clinical expertise devalued? What constitutes good evidence? It is perhaps noteworthy that in the current world of clinical psychiatry, these questions, with their emphases reversed, are foregrounded in the scientific and public press. One can be struck by the proverbial pendulum from either side!

An area of focus for *JAPA* contributors at the clinical/research interface has been the development and study of symptom- or syndrome-targeted psychoanalytic psychotherapies. Treatments for panic disorder (Busch, Milrod, and Sandberg 2007) and borderline personality

disorder (Caligor et al. 2009) have been manualized and investigated in relation to their efficacy compared to therapies that are not dynamically oriented. While creating considerable interest within psychotherapy research circles, these treatments and their scientific study have been slow to be embraced by the psychoanalytic community. They are rarely taught at psychoanalytic institutes and have so far not become an expected part of a psychoanalyst's skill set. They are time- and resource-efficient treatments, based on psychoanalytic understanding of syndromal/symptom dynamics that are widely recognized, and could help make inroads for psychoanalysis in the broader clinical mental health community. Suspicion about whether manualized treatments can retain psychoanalytic values, as well as mistrust of research findings that aggregate patients into cohorts, reflects a commitment of many analysts to valorizing the uniqueness of each patient/analyst pair at the expense of obtaining knowledge via generalization. It continues to be difficult for psychoanalysts to find a middle ground in relation to these research questions and to get beyond a long-standing contentiousness regarding psychotherapy as a threat to psychoanalytic principles.

JAPA has begun an ongoing section on psychoanalytic education. While many decisions about educational activities are made at the local institute level, it is important that our teaching efforts become the subject of transparent and scholarly study and debate. Contributions have included examination of candidate experiences (Ward, Gibson, and Miqueu-Baz 2010), exploration of the educational functions of training analyses (Cabaniss and Bosworth 2006; Bosworth, Aizaza, and Cabaniss 2009), curriculum development (Jordan and Emde 2006), and post-training career choices (Cherry et al. 2004a,b). Some of these contributions have been in research format. We hope to extend these researches to better characterize current educational practices, as well as to examine attempts at innovation.

The *JAPA* Review of Books continues as a journal within a journal, and we have expanded the book essay format to move beyond publishing individual book reviews. This has allowed contributions to expose important wider areas of scholarship and practice that have increasingly become the subject of book-length works. Similarly, we have continued to report on foreign language books we consider of particular importance, in keeping with an expansion of *JAPA*'s efforts at internationalization.

Internationalization presents journal editors with difficult challenges. There are national and cultural evidentiary and rhetorical traditions that make reviewing “foreign” contributions demanding. Appeal to authority, tolerance, perhaps even valorizing, of ambiguity, unfamiliar metaphor, and jargon—all can be off-putting and lead to intolerance of difference, thus impoverishing what *JAPA* readers might be exposed to, were foreign authors not allowed to write in their own idiom. Determining the limits regarding these issues has been challenging. The guiding perspective has been a commitment to meet the unfamiliar with extra effort, a stance we believe repays the adventurous reader.

It is hard to predict what the future holds for *JAPA*, but there are certain trends that need to be taken into account in maintaining the vitality and quality of psychoanalytic scholarly discourse for which the journal is known. Psychoanalysts, like our colleagues in adjacent disciplines, increasingly expect rapid access to new ideas and easy opportunity for dialogue with authors, investigators, and clinicians reporting novel findings or proposing innovative techniques. In many ways, this flies in the face of the conservative nature of scholarly journals, traditionally considered repositories for gradually and painstakingly accumulated knowledge and experience. The speed of contemporary information exchange is a poor fit with the slow and meticulous preparation of scholarly manuscripts, as it is with the careful, peer-reviewed editorial process and the revision and copyediting that characterize a journal like *JAPA*. Most manuscripts take months to research and write, and then another three to six months for review, revision, and preparation for printed publication. While this timeline has always seemed necessary for careful and thoughtful scholarly work, it is out of sync with our times, much as our meticulous and time-intensive clinical work seems foreign to the way most contemporary lives are lived. While we know the advantages of our traditional ways in both domains, we need to be responsive to our times and mores. I foresee dialogic formats for authors and readers to exchange ideas becoming a larger part of *JAPA*, along with more traditional papers, research reports, essays, and reviews. *JAPA* is now available electronically, and new formats will surely take advantage of electronic media, the world in which younger psychoanalysts and people in general have been educated. How the new and the old will be integrated is unclear. Is dialogue scholarship? Are blogs an appropriate vehicle for disseminating new ideas? Will the immediacy of new formats discourage authors from writing traditional manuscripts? It seems likely that books and papers

will exist side by side with blogs, podcasts, chat rooms, and unknown, yet to be developed new communicative channels. Quality criteria will need to be enlarged to include adaptability to electronic formatting, ease of dissemination, and dialogic plasticity to allow for real-time creative co-construction. The editors of the future will need new skill sets, along with the time-honored ones of careful scholarship, impartiality, and tact. It is already the case that many academic journals are struggling to maintain their levels of manuscript submission and subscribers. While *JAPA* has done well in both domains in relation to its peer publications, it must remain nimble, innovative, and open-minded.

This essay, like many pieces in *JAPA* during the past year, was written in celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the American Psychoanalytic Association. Throughout its history, psychoanalysis has been received skeptically and has often been under attack. This should come as no surprise to anyone, given its aim of uncovering what is regularly denied, disguised, and forgotten regarding mental life. Just as clinical psychoanalytic work is always accompanied by resistance to knowing and to changing, so too our discipline in its entirety will never enjoy sustained popularity from the outside or unity from within. It is psychoanalytic ideas that will endure, and it is the responsibility of the psychoanalytic literature to maintain a scholarly record of our contributions to knowledge, as well as a forum for continuous revision and refinement of what should be our discipline's lasting legacy. Careful scholarship should accompany our many oral traditions. Psychoanalytic writing, both clinical and theoretical, requires nurturing in our educational institutions. New authors need to be recruited, novel formulations welcomed, and the familiar reiterated and updated.

Every journal has a style and traditions that distinguish it from its competitors. *JAPA*, while welcoming the new and innovative, has always sought via its editorial practices to place new ideas in historical context, both within papers themselves and, more recently, with informed outside commentary. In a similar vein, adjacent disciplines have been aggressively recruited for their tempering and evocative input. *JAPA* has a far greater presence within academic libraries than in the past, and its electronic availability is a boon to scholars. Just as we need to fight for our clinical marketplace, so will we need to protect our scholarly literature, invest resources in its future, and nurture the next generation of writers and editors. As a psychoanalyst who has spent his entire professional career as a full-time university professor, I am more than ever convinced

of the need for aggressive advocacy, an often tactfully pugnacious attitude, and a sound supporting system of scholarship including, where appropriate, empirical research support. A literature to which to turn for ideas, data, teaching tools, and interdisciplinary dialogue, in my view, is essential to sustaining a contributing presence for our authors and our institutions. I am optimistic about our future as a discipline because of the compelling nature of our ideas and support doing all we can to ensure that *JAPA* remains a leading vehicle for their development and dissemination. We will always have to fight for our place. Our literature, the permanent record of our ideas, remains an indispensable tool for making our case to a reluctant world.

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