



Prologue: Images in Mind: Working with Image-based Experience in Psychotherapeutic Treatment

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Prologue: Images in Mind: Working with Image-based Experience in Psychotherapeutic Treatment

For many decades, cognitive scientists have debated the question of whether mental images exist in the mind or whether they merely appear to exist (Tye, 1991). To those of us not directly involved in this discussion, the question may appear somewhat academic. After all, as Kosslyn (2005) described, if I ask you to tell me the shape of Mickey Mouse's ears, you will undoubtedly do so through the use of an image in your mind's eye. In many ways, my understanding of this debate centers on the question of how much we can trust what we see when we look inside. The stark experience of subjectivity present when images are evoked appears to likewise have some bearing on the position images hold in clinical treatment, most specifically in psychodynamic psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. And although the word *distrust* is perhaps too strong, there does appear to be a subtle discomfort with images dating back to the origins of psychoanalysis (Singer, 1971). And yet, as will become clear from the articles to follow, images and image-based experience are alive and well.

In conceptualizing this issue for *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, it was my intention to provide a space for the reader to become acquainted with some of the forms that image-based experience currently takes in psychodynamic treatment and psychoanalysis. What emerges from this discussion, however, has the potential to take the reader beyond a simple recognition of images as a part of psychotherapy process and into realms of philosophy, art, poetry, and neurobiology that offer rich opportunities for therapeutic enhancement.

The issue begins with an article from Rebecca Curtis that traces the use of imagery from Freud and Jung to contemporary authors and theorists. The history of imagery she documents reveals a subtle path of ambivalence surrounding imagery within the psychoanalytic culture. Bringing in her own approach to imagery, Curtis reveals a number of ways in which imagery can be used within a treatment. And as she finishes her article, Curtis discloses a vulnerable moment of the uncanny and its relationship to imagery.

Following this is my own article on the relationship of image to imagination. Building on contemporary research and theory from neurobiology and cognitive neuroscience, my article proposes that images and image-based experiences are part of the natural workings of a dynamic and creative brain/mind. Referring to this mind as imaginative, I look at the ways in which this experience of mind can be accessed within psychodynamic treatment.

Michael Eigen then offers a unique history of images as they moved from obscurity and infamy to a position of modest respectability. Through religion, philosophy, literature, and the various schools of psychology and psychoanalysis, Eigen brings readers toward an understanding of the image as a cultural emblem, a representation of what is most difficult to assimilate. Ultimately, Eigen prepares the ground for a long-awaited integration of mind, body and spirit. He revives a mysticism long neglected in the cold halls of clinical thought and with a delicate mix of clinical material and personal reverie, Eigen brings readers to a place where the full and the empty come to meet.

Dana Amir's article on language and trauma takes the reader into the realms of linguistic dissociation and transformation. She explores the ways in which trauma impacts and shapes one's inner world as revealed in the subtle linguistic differences in narrative testimony. She identifies four modes of testimony, the *metaphoric*, the *metonymic*, the *excessive-psychotic*, and the *Muselmann-psychotic*. And, as the article reveals, buried deep within the metaphoric mode are potentials for both change and creative transformation.

Stefanie Teitelbaum offers a fresh look at Freud's case, the Wolf-Man. Through a fascinating exploration of theory and imagery, Teitelbaum enters an ambiguous zone of presence and absence in the drawing of the wolves and the imagery of Pankejeff's dream. She weaves a sensitive portrait of Freud as a man obsessed with a theory and unable to care for the man who lay before him.

And finally, Mark Gerald offers a fresh relational look at the images that are right before one's clinical eyes. He discusses how Freud privileged what was heard over what was seen. Delicately weaving together strands of personal and clinical material, Gerald evokes deep wonderings about the ways in which the faces and spaces of psychoanalysis come to occupy our inner visual world.

With deep appreciation to Mel Bornstein and Joe Lichtenberg for the opportunity to present these articles, I welcome you to this issue of *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*.

Frank Faranda, Ph.D.
Issue Editor

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