

VPSG Friday Forum: September 25, 2015

Lewis Kirshner, MD joined our VPSG list of distinguished guest analysts presenting to our joint candidates and members Friday Forum series. Ron Brown, Judith Kantrowitz, Fred Busch, and Mitchell Wilson, have all shared their thinking with our nascent group previously. Dr. Kirshner is a Training and Supervising Analyst at the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute and a Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School.

We read Dr. Kirshner's (2014) JAPA paper, "Raids on the Unsayable: Talk in Psychoanalysis" in advance of his talk. He began the evening by asking the group for their associations to the term intersubjectivity. He then gave us a brief history of the term and its increasing usage, citations in PEP web exponentially doubling in the past 4 decades in psychoanalytic writing. He shared with us his recent work exploring this concept; its uses and usefulness and its problematic usage. The importance of asymmetry in the analytic encounter and the challenges to the analyst to be both caught up in the transference and to remain reflective about the experience was explored. The capacity to think, the complex change process taking place in analysis through talking, listening to listening, language, subjectivity and the work of the analyst were all mentioned. He then read a clinical case written more than a decade ago to show a shift in his clinical thinking from a primarily ego psychological grounding to making use of Lacanian concepts. That same case is now being reconsidered from a new vantage point, that of the role of the analyst's subjectivity as it impacts the analysis.

So many ideas and not nearly enough time to discuss them all! We had our appetites whetted and our questions increased; it was an evening to listen and to think. I do believe that we came away with a willingness to further explore the question of subjectivity; not as a part of the vocabulary of a particular school of psychoanalytic thinking but as an invitation to consider how we develop a self. The question what makes us who we are, how plastic is that organization and what does psychoanalytic treatment offer to adults in uncovering and reworking that inner structure remains central to any practicing analyst. The inner self, our core, built up over many layers of interactions with others, the environment and symbolized or carried silently and yet to be represented in each of us remains the subject of our inquiry.

Thanks to Dr. Kirshner and the VPSG members and candidates in attendance; Susan Alnasrawi, Mika Barker Hart, Douglas Betts, Emma Burrous, Douglas Dennett, Sharon Dennett, Sandra Howell, Carol Lidstrom and Betsy Sprague and guest Dawn Skorzewski for contributing to the discussion.

Submitted: SWDennett 9/27/2015