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viewpoints

fiftieth anniversary
NJI
FIFTY YEARS
reflections

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A note from the editor

Wilda Mesias, PhD

My love is something valuable to me which I ought not to throw away without reflection.

Sigmund Freud*

In September 1972, two graduates from the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis, Joel Bernstein, PhD and Neil Wilson, PhD, held the first class of what was to become the New Jersey Institute for Training in Psychoanalysis (NJI). The year 2022 marks fifty years since that time.

I feel very fortunate to have known both of our co-founders during my training at NJI. Joel was my analyst, and Neil was my second control. In 2017, we lost Joel. He was a lover of Freud, a pianist, a composer, and an admirer of Frank Sinatra. Neil, who recently celebrated his ninetieth birthday, continues to be an active and invaluable member of NJI's community. He still sees patients at 800 Catalpa Ave., and, when asked about his life nowadays, he shares that he goes to the gym, attends plays, and tries

to be a good husband.

NJI has continued to train psychoanalysts to this day because of Joel and Neil's vision, a vision grounded in creativity and in their love for psychoanalysis.

The spring 2022 issue of *Viewpoints in Psychoanalysis* honors both of our co-founders, celebrates our semicentennial, and remembers those members who are no longer with us. The contributors to this issue of *Viewpoints* reflect on shared experiences of a single vision and on the lasting impact of the drive to create.

I am grateful to all the authors who made this issue possible. I am especially indebted to Robert Mollinger for his words about Joel, Neil, and NJI; to Lorna Goldberg for her tribute to Joel; and to Neil Wilson for sharing his reflections and hopes in an interview.

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* Civilization and its Discontents, in The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. 21, at 109 (James Strachey trans. 1961).

A Review of Jasper Johns: Mind/Mirror

Philadelphia Museum of Art

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

United States of America

Wilda Mesias, PhD

Jasper Johns, the American painter, sculptor, and printmaker, celebrated his ninetieth birthday on May 15, 2020. To commemorate it, the most comprehensive retrospective of his work, *Jasper Johns: Mind/Mirror*, was planned to open in that same year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the show's opening was postponed until September 29, 2021. On this date, the exhibit simultaneously opened at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The almost 500 works of art in the show were divided across these two different venues. The Whitney portion was curated by Scott Rothkopf; the Philadelphia Museum of Art portion, by Carlos Basualdo. Two halves of a whole.

This unique *mise en scène* for *Mind/Mirror* seemed, to me, to invite two impressions: one from the vantage of artistic knowledge with an appreciation for the psychoanalytic method and another from the perspective of the psychoanalyst that appreciates art. Beyond the actual setup of *Mind/Mirror*, Johns's oeuvre offers the ideal space for binate views, for contrasts and reflections, since much of his work is devoted to the twin concepts of the mirror and the double.

On a beautiful, sunny fall day, I found myself

in New York City's meatpacking district, which since 2015 has been home to the Whitney's latest space, designed by Renzo Piano. Here, amid large, open galleries—some of them with views of the Hudson—Johns's work appeared to be grouped primarily by themes, despite the exhibit's chronological order.

A couple of months later, on a cold January day, I made the trip to Philadelphia to see the exhibit's second half. In this city, the Museum of Art is in the Fairmount neighborhood, its home since 1929. The famous steps that Rocky Balboa climbs in the film *Rocky* (1976) lead to the Museum's main entrance. At the bottom of the steps, a sign reminds the visitor that the museum was once a reservoir. Here, the museum galleries—reminiscent of those found in European museums—take the viewer through Johns's work in a symmetrical, orderly manner. The viewer is invited to enter and follow Johns's work chronologically in a mostly linear tour through the windowless galleries.

Freud and Lacan wrote extensively about their approach to creative works: art, literature, music, and film. One of the ways Freud viewed artistic expression was as a sublimation, a process in which libido is deflected from its original aim to non-sexual and non-conflicted activities. This desexualization of libido opens

the path to creative endeavors. For Freud, literature, painting, and sculpture offered, like dreams, a road to the unconscious, an entrance to the creator's psyche. Like Freud, Lacan had significant interest in art, literary and visual. And even though he referenced sublimation in his seminars, Lacan felt that it was undesirable for psychoanalysis to say anything about the psychology of the artist. He suspended the inquiry into the creator's motive or intent. As, for Lacan, the unconscious is structured like a language, the analysand's discourse—or, as relevant here, the discourse of the creative work—needs to be treated like a text.

Jasper Johns's work is extensive and influential, and, naturally, its potential connections to his biography have been discussed profusely. His growing up, his parents' divorce, his military experience, his romantic relationship with Robert Rauschenberg, his reclusiveness—all have been subjects of significant inquiry. Johns is well-known for not explaining his work or process. In interviews, he is reticent, perhaps not wanting to be the subject of exploration.

Johns's work has been associated with abstract expressionism, Neo-Dada, and pop art. The Neo-Dada movement, in particular, sought to highlight the idea that the meaning in art was something personal that could only be defined within an individual. Neo-Dadaists thus believed that the intent of the artist was irrelevant and that meaning was created through the viewer's interpretation—one can hear here the echoes of Lacan.

Although walking through an art exhibit does not involve sitting in the room with an analysand as the clinical process unfolds, I believe the former asks me to do something similar to what I would do in the latter case:

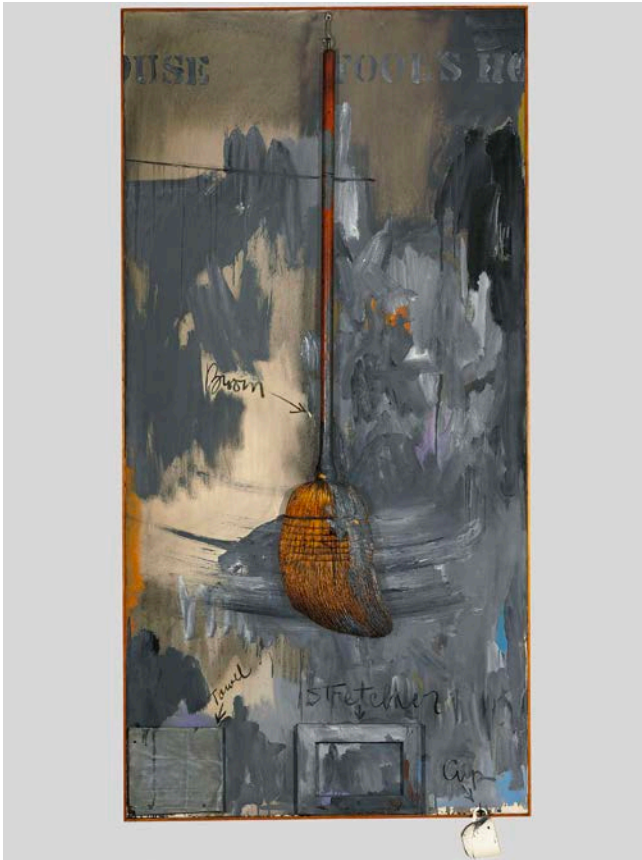
enter the space without preconceptions and see how the experience of the material unfolds.

As Freud says, “the attitude which the analytic physician could most advantageously adopt was to surrender himself to his own unconscious mental activity, in a state of *evenly suspended attention*, to avoid so far as possible reflection and the construction of conscious expectations, not to try to fix anything that he heard particularly in his memory, and by these means to catch the drift of the patient's unconscious with his own unconscious.”¹



Jasper Johns, *Flag* (1954-55), PMA (MoMA collection), <https://philamuseum.org/calendar/exhibition/jasper-johns-mindmirror/circa-1954>

At the entrance to the Philadelphia portion of the show, one is greeted by one of Johns's iconic flags, and one learns that circa 1954, when Johns was 24 years old, he destroyed all of his work with the goal of not trying to be an artist but simply being one. Soon after this, he painted his first flag. From there, one moves to early works that incorporate ordinary objects (e.g., fountain pens, spoons) and to his well-known *Fool's House*, which contains a large broom. Incorporating these quotidian objects amid abstraction blends reality into art or, as the wall text suggests, tests “the relationship between image, language and object.”²

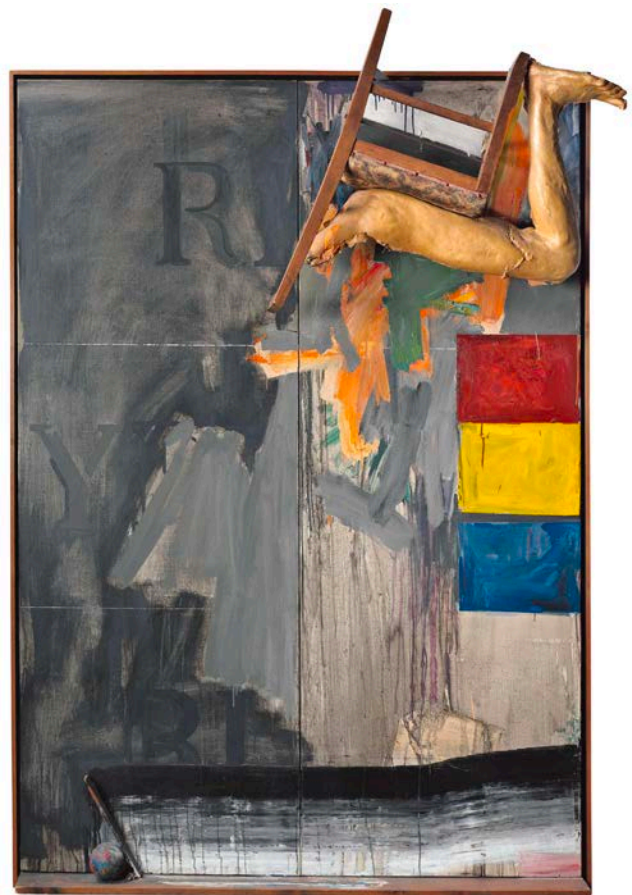


Jasper Johns, Fool's House (1961-62), PMA (private collection), <https://philamuseum.org/calendar/exhibition/jasper-johns-mindmirror/real-things-paintings>

Moving along the space, numbers and colors come into view. We learn that, since the 1950s, Johns has created more than 170 paintings, drawings, prints, and sculptures that feature numbers, usually as individual figures, as sequences, or as various images superimposed on one another. One can appreciate the tracing and retracing of elements with which the mind is well-acquainted: repetition, precision, compulsion, appearing and disappearing, figure and ground in an intrinsic dance.

The Leo Castelli period (1960) follows. Castelli, a prominent art dealer, represented Johns in his first solo exhibition and continued to do

so until Castelli's death in 1999. In the space dedicated to Japan, Johns's well-known piece *Watchman* comes into view, along with other works influenced by his time in this country. One reads that while Johns was traveling in Japan, he wrote about the differences between the figures of the "watchman" and the "spy." The wall text quotes Johns: "The Watchman falls 'into' the 'trap' of looking," and "tak[ing] away no information," while "[t]he spy must remember"—remembering both "himself and his remembering. The spy designs himself to be overlooked. The watchman 'serves' as a warning."³



Jasper Johns, Watchman (1964), PMA (The Eli and Edythe L. Broad Collection), <https://philamuseum.org/calendar/exhibition/jasper-johns-mindmirror/japan>

After this, the room titled *Doubles and*

Reflections comes into view. In this space, symmetrical structures, mirrors, doubles, and reflections are the primary focus, bringing to mind image and process and allowing for the emergence of something quite ephemeral. As if in the process of capturing an image, something is forever lost. Lacan's *méconnaissance* (misrecognition) comes to mind.

In the gallery titled *Nightmares*, one learns that, in the 1980s, Johns's work was marked by a somber mood and perplexing images. The work from this period that the Whitney's exhibit contains comes also to mind, the two halves becoming a whole. The work is engaging, simultaneously beautiful and frightening. The home(l)y (*heimelig/heim-lich*) among the unhome(y) (*unheimlich*).

The last stop contains *Elegies in Light*. Johns's

more recent work is here. Motifs that one recognizes from his early work, transformed, reawaken with perhaps—if possible—more directness and maturity. Skulls, the vacillation of figure and ground, abundant white space, and delicate, tenuous cloths hanging create an intimate yet ineffable emotion.

Moving from moment to moment in the exhibit, I found myself being pulled in different directions. Johns's insertion of the familiar amid the unfamiliar, coupled with his doubles, evokes Freud's uncanny. Objects and part objects, the play of construction and deconstruction, and the iteration of mirrors and reflections give rise to feelings of loss and alienation. The repetition of themes, Johns's tracing and retracing, brings to mind the repetition compulsion or—perhaps much more—the feeling that, in the act of repeating, the desired object consistently



Jasper Johns, *Untitled* (2002), PMA (private collection), <https://philamuseum.org/calendar/exhibition/jasper-johns-mindmirror/elegies-light>

evades us, and that which we want but can't define is consistently lost. The chromatic and the achromatic may suggest the dance of life and death, the interdependence of Eros and Thanatos.

The purity of Johns's aesthetic—its blending of permanence and impermanence—filtered through me as I drove back home from Philadelphia. This brought to mind the walk that Freud takes with a young poet (presumed to be Rilke) on a summer day, recounted in *On Transience* (1915), one of my favorite essays by Freud. Freud writes:

A flower that blossoms only for a single night does not seem to us on that account less lovely. Nor can I understand any better why the beauty and perfection of a work of art or of an intellectual achievement should lose its worth because of its temporal limitation. A time may indeed come when the pictures and statues which we admire to-day will crumble to dust, or a race of men may follow us who no longer understands the works of our poets and thinkers, or a geological epoch may even arrive when all animate life upon the earth ceases; but since the value of all this beauty and perfection is determined only by its significance for our own emotional lives, it has no need to survive us and is therefore independent of absolute duration.⁴

As a 24-year-old, Johns destroyed all his work to begin again, driven by his desire not to try to be an artist, but in fact to be one. In his fifties he created a series of prints titled *Usuyuki*, Japanese for light snow (something that passes quickly). The name of this series of works, largely composed of densely crosshatched lines, comes from a Kabuki play that has been described by Johns as being about “the fleeting

quality of beauty in the world.”⁵

In his most recent work done as an octogenarian, there is something quite sublime: figure, ground, and white space giving a sensation of presence and absence, vanitas of skeletons in different poses and attires, almost as if narrating the many poses we take in life.

On *Mind/Mirror*'s opening day, *Time* published a very short interview with Jasper Johns (he replied via email). The three questions I am selecting to include here appear to say it all.

For what in your life do you feel most grateful?

I am lucky for being able to devote myself to work that remains interesting to me. . . .

Your work is sometimes regarded as chilly or detached. Do you understand that perception?

No.

Robert Rauschenberg said that “Good art can never be understood.” Do you agree?

Not with the language. I don't know that art can be understood in any final way, but a search for understanding tends to open one's eyes rather than close them.⁶

If Johns's goal was to be an artist, perhaps he achieved it the moment he let go of his work to begin again—as if, as a young man, he already understood the fleeting nature of life. His work transcends the conscious, and, like the psychoanalytical process, opens the eyes instead of closing them.

A Review of Jasper Johns: Mind/Mirror

Lucas Daniel Guatrecasas

Whitney Museum of American Art

New York City, New York

United States of America

To stop and look at a work by Jasper Johns is to fall into a trap.
Carlos Basualdo⁷

In his canonical story *Death and the Compass*, Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges narrates a detective's investigation of a series of murders apparently linked to a mystical quest to unveil a secret name for God. By the third murder, the locations of the crime scenes form an equilateral triangle across the city, perhaps suggesting the series is complete. But the detective—the redoubtable Erik Lönnrot—suspects differently. He recognizes that the prophesied name for God has *four* letters, not three. He knows there will be a fourth murder to the south of the triangle, forming a rhombus.



Jasper Johns, *Disappearance II* (1961), Whitney (Toyama Prefectural Museum of Art and Design), <https://whitney.org/exhibitions/jasper-johns?section=2#exhibition-artworks>

Lönnrot thus makes his way to the south of the city and enters an old villa called Triste-le-Roy. The villa is filled with doubles: matching sculptures in niches, matching balconies, double stairways reflecting each other. And, at Triste-le-Roy, Lönnrot unexpectedly meets with another double: his arch nemesis, Red Scharlach (Borges has a playful attitude toward the clichéd interchangeability of heroes and villains: in German, *rot* is red, and *Scharlach* is scarlet).⁸ As it turns out, Red Scharlach has created this elaborate geometric puzzle to lure Lönnrot to the south of the city, where there indeed will be a fourth death: Lönnrot's own.

As Red Scharlach prepares to shoot Lönnrot in the villa, Lönnrot muses:

“There are three lines too many in your labyrinth . . . I know of a Greek labyrinth that is but one straight line. So many philosophers have been lost upon that line that a mere detective might be pardoned if he became lost as well. When you hunt me down in another avatar of our lives, Scharlach, I suggest that you fake (or commit) one crime at A, a second crime at B, eight kilometers from A, then a third crime at C, four kilometers from A and B and halfway between them. Then wait for me at D, two kilometers from A and C, once

again halfway between them. Kill me at D, as you are about to kill me at Triste-le-Roy.”⁹

Lönnrot’s last words add a new dimension to the doubling on which the story is built. In Lönnrot’s view, doubles may be a symptom of the infinite repetitions that make up our experiences, but, ultimately, we don’t need to multiply the world to lose ourselves in it. Even the irreducibly singular (a straight line of determinate length) contains its own double—and the double of that double, and those doubles’ doubles, and so on.

The exhibition *Mind/Mirror: Jasper Johns*, shown simultaneously at the Whitney in New York City and at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, reaches for—or stumbles upon—a similar revelation. The exhibition was structured around a laundry list of doubles, some already present in Jasper Johns’s enormously famous oeuvre and some built on top of it. From his incorporation of ordinary studio objects (e.g., paintbrushes, rulers, coffee cans) into his earlier paintings to his musings on the distinct shape of a hanging string in his later *Catenary* series, probing the mechanics of how art reproduces physical reality is at the core of Johns’s art. It’s this focus on art as a mirror of everyday forms—art as the defamiliarized twin of our banal surroundings—that makes the exhibition’s theme so generative. It’s also what makes Johns’s art so conceptually elegant, giving his work staying power despite its fundamentally conservative, even academic nature. Johns has a permanent place in the annals of art history as an experimenter, but he got it by exploiting the oldest riddle in the art-school book: does art imitate life, or is it the other way around?

In a sense, the rest of the doubles underscored in the exhibition derive from that old riddle. The most obvious doubling staged by the show—the fact that it took place in two different museums at once—has some practical grounding. After all, there was a lot of art in this exhibition.¹⁰ But it was also an opportunity for the curators to geographically dramatize some of the formal gymnastics in Johns’s work. Like Johns’s well-known *Painted Bronze*—a bronze sculpture cast from two beer cans and painted to look like those two beer cans—the two-museum conceit riffs on absence and endlessness. Because Johns’s work is self-referential, and because the Whitney galleries cross-reference the Philadelphia Museum of Art galleries (and vice versa), each half of the exhibition makes reference to complementary objects that aren’t present (to the other set of “real” beer cans, somewhere in the world, as it were).¹¹ At the same time, each half constitutes a self-contained experience with its own inexhaustible depth (consider the unavoidable thought of Johns making a cast of *Painted Bronze* itself, painting a new sculpture to look exactly like *Painted Bronze*, and then making a cast of *that* sculpture to make *yet another* sculpture painted to look like the second sculpture, etc., etc.).



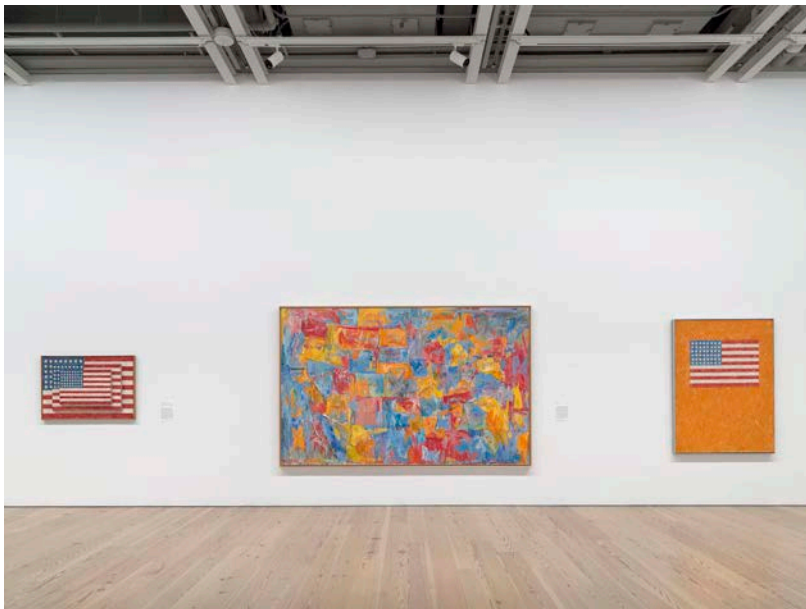
Jasper Johns, *Painted Bronze* (1960), Whitney, <https://whitney.org/exhibitions/jasper-johns?section=8#exhibition-artworks>

The New York half of the show is particularly attuned to this dynamic. The gallery in which Johns's iconic *Three Flags* is displayed contains a vast assortment of Johns's paintings of the American flag or a map of the United States, which run the gamut from relatively representational to more figurative or gestural. Johns's technical skill makes each one of these a deft standalone piece in a series of formally similar works. Yet the gallery's aggregation of symbols that are the same or conceptually linked reminds the viewer that these works are fundamentally based on the replication of pervasive images. This context lends *Three Flags*'s most notable feature, its three-dimensional stacking of canvases, two meanings that are in apparent tension with each other. Compositionally, the emphasis on Johns's sustained engagement with these motifs highlights the painting's uniquely engrossing, even hypnotizing take on the flag. Conceptually, it draws attention to the flag as a ubiquitous image that is meant to be immediately recognized, more than carefully perused for latent details.

The very fact that Johns's art does a lot of conceptual work on its own means that some of

the New York show's flourishes feel unneeded. One gallery contains four interior walls that run across it in an x-shape, each lined with reflective trim. The gallery is dedicated to some of Johns's works that most explicitly evoke the theme of the double. Of course, *Painted Bronze* appears here, as do canvases that reflect the composition of a twin canvas (e.g., *Mirror's Edge* and its sibling *Mirror's Edge 2*), make use of optical illusions that vacillate between two different figures, or contain eclectic motifs that repeat themselves throughout Johns's oeuvre (including an image of a galaxy,¹² a stick figure, a ladder, and, indeed, optical illusions). The interior walls allow for the presentation of two-dimensional works back-to-back such that one might imagine them as two sides of one another—a spatial illustration of the iterative nature of Johns's work. But the emphasis on immediately perceptible examples of mirroring in Johns's art (and the decision to put them at the center of the show, for x marks the spot), risks overwhelming some of the subtlety of Johns's engagement with doubles.

Indeed, some of the less straightforward instances of doubling in Johns's work seem relegated to corners of the exhibition that



Installation view of Jasper Johns: *Mind/Mirror* (Whitney, September 29, 2021–February 13, 2022) [from left to right: *Three Flags* (1958); *Map* (1961); *Flag on Orange Field* (1957)], Whitney, <https://whitney.org/exhibitions/jasper-johns>

are farther away from the spotlight. Take, for example, Johns's more recent painting (i.e., his canvasses from the 1990s and twenty-first century, roughly), which the exhibit's mostly chronological ordering lumps near the end. These works are teeming with doubles that are variously funereal, pensive, and sardonic: for example, Johns's replication of preexisting works (e.g., distorted faces that are quotes from Picasso, variations on a 1965 picture of a certain lance corporal "break[ing] down" in sorrow during the Vietnam War) and the *Catenary* series's above-mentioned tension between presenting us with an *actual* hanging string and a *reproduction* of that string in paint. Johns also reprises, with new intensity, doubles showing up in his earlier work (e.g., pervasive use of Rubin's vase—that is, the two-faces-or-a-vase optical illusion). In fact, perhaps the most impactful double in the show is the figure of a grinning skeleton sporting a top-hat, a character that appears frequently in Johns's later works. Tellingly, the skeleton's bones are often *contained within* a second figure: a blocky outline of a human body, which

tracks and mirrors the skeleton's contours. One reading here is that the skeleton remains encased in a body that is not dead yet; it is a latent double of its living counterpart. And, in fact, in one of the canvases at the Whitney, the silhouette is traced from Johns's own shadow (another double).¹³ Aside from the inevitable interpretation of these canvases as being about Johns's own mortality,¹⁴ the doubling in these works bears out, more broadly, another one of the oldest themes in the art-school book: art as a suspension of life, which, in preserving its subject through reproduction, anticipates the subject's inevitable death.

In a similar vein, in his essay *The Uncanny*, Sigmund Freud points to Otto Rank's investigation of the double as a figure that simultaneously represents immortality and a premonition of death.¹⁵ Freud connects this phenomenon to the way that, in the language of dreams, the multiplicity of an object may indicate its sinister absence.¹⁶ More broadly, Freud's essay observes in various ways that doubling, though sometimes appearing innocuous at first, has the potential to



Jasper Johns, *Untitled* (2018), Whitney (private collection), <https://whitney.org/exhibitions/jasper-johns?section=12#exhibition-artworks>



Jasper Johns, *Skin with O'Hara Poem* (1963-65), MoMA, <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/61278>

evolve—or to multiply—into a phenomenon causing terror or feelings of helplessness.¹⁷ The resonances between Freud’s analysis and Johns’s work are numerous and seem to be widely intuited.¹⁸ For example, Johns’s paintings of repeating, superimposed numbers seem to capture the impression behind Freud’s quip that seeing a number recur various times in one’s everyday settings may make one “tempted to ascribe a secret meaning to this obstinate recurrence.”¹⁹ Or consider that Johns’s occasional use of faces without eyes—as in his canvas *Target with Four Faces* or in the print of his face and hands *Skin with O’Hara Poem*—might be read as an illustration of Freud’s situation of the uncanny’s origin in the fear of losing one’s eyes.²⁰

Yet it may be the ultimate upshot of Freud’s essay that provides the most apt connection to Johns’s work. For Freud, doubling’s ability to evoke the uncanny is owed to the fundamentally disturbing nature of the repetition compulsion: our story will always, unavoidably, end the same way—like Oedipus’s did—no matter what we do. “[W]hatever reminds us of this inner ‘compulsion to repeat’ is perceived as uncanny,” Freud writes.²¹ It’s perhaps this aspect of doubling—not just repetition, but the inevitability of repetition—that lends Johns’s work its lasting, ineffable, and vaguely disturbing power. Like Lönrott, Johns inhabits a world of ever-multiplying doubles. These doubles immerse the viewer in a perpetually recurring sequence, a “labyrinthine oeuvre” that has no beginning or end and thus will continue even after Johns stops making art, much like Lönrott and Scharlach’s cat-and-mouse game, which continues beyond the span of a single lifetime.²² But, in so doing, Johns’s overt doubles also always point to something less immediately perceptible and, ultimately, less

comprehensible: the Oedipal repetition, the inability to deviate—to escape—from the linear sequence that, itself, contains infinity. The outwardly observable repetitions in Johns’s work are the echoes of that more inscrutable, Borgesian broken record of the trap we cannot eschew, even if we have all the clues to where that trap lies.

A look at virtually any one of Johns’s canvasses can reveal this. Laid down with Johns’s usual technical precision, each brushstroke or mark combines with the broader composition to illustrate Johns’s pictorial mainstays: a target, a distorted face, a galaxy, a flag. But the infinite lines created, erased, and retraced by the physical labor of painting, drawing, printing, and sculpting are also just that: traces of one artist’s repetition of internal and external impressions, the never-ending and somewhat mundane task of reproducing the world.²³ This rich visual texture contains overt messages for us to decode, but those messages, like Scharlach’s geometric scheme, point us to a bigger puzzle, one so vast that it is impossible to fully depict or imagine. In the shadow of that puzzle, each detail presents itself less as a part of a whole and more as a mark left on the walls of the never-ending labyrinth we inhabit: a labyrinth we can only glimpse through the countless, smaller, inevitable repetitions that, together, amount to a life or a life’s work.

endnotes

¹ The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. 18 at 239 (James Strachey trans. 1955) [hereinafter SE, followed by volume number].

² Wall text, Jasper Johns: Mind/Mirror, Pa. Museum of Art, Sept. 29, 2021–Feb. 13, 2022.

³ Id. (quoting Jasper Johns, Sketchbook page, Book A, 1964, in Carlos Basualdo & Scott Rothkopf, *Jasper Johns: Mind/Mirror* 139 (2021)).

⁴ SE vol. 14 at 306.

⁵ Basualdo & Rothkopf, *supra* note 3, at 113.

⁶ Belinda Luscombe, “Jasper Johns: ‘Dying While on Assignment Doesn’t Seem Like a Bad Idea,’” *Time* (Sept. 29, 2021), <https://time.com/6101828/jasper-johns-interview>.

⁷ Carlos Basualdo, “Jasper Johns: Master of Chance,” in Basualdo & Rothkopf, *supra* note 3, at 325.

⁸ See, e.g., John P. Dyson, “On Naming in Borges’s ‘La muerte y la brújula,’” 37 *Comp. Literature* 140, 142–43, 142 n.4 (1985).

⁹ Jorge Luis Borges, *Collected Fictions* 156 (Andrew Hurley trans. 1998). Ellipsis indicates omission.

¹⁰ More than 500 works, which is apparently greater than the number originally contemplated before the show was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Compare Press Release, Pa. Museum of Art & Whitney Museum of Am. Art, *In Fall 2020, A Lifetime Retrospective Dedicated to Jasper Johns Will Be Presented Simultaneously in New York and Philadelphia* (Mar. 2, 2020), <https://press.philamuseum.org/in-fall-2020-a-lifetime-retrospective-dedicated-to-jasper-johns-will-be-presented-simultaneously-in-new-york-and-philadelphia> (<500), with Deborah Solomon, *Seeing Double with Jasper Johns*, *N.Y. Times* (Sept. 13, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/13/arts/design/jasper-johns-mind-mirror.html> (>500), and Sebastian

Smee, *Seeing Jasper Johns: A Seminal Artist’s Career Is Celebrated and Illuminated in Two Cities*, *Wash. Post* (Sept. 29, 2021), https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/jasper-johns-exhibit-review-smee/2021/09/28/03484042-1d63-11ec-bcb8-0cb135811007_story.html (>500).

¹¹ Sequentially, the *Painted Bronze* sculpture (in two different editions) appears at the center of both the Whitney and the Philadelphia Museum of Art portions of the show. See Harry Cooper, *Doubletake*, *Artforum* n.3 (Jan. 2022), <https://www.artforum.com/print/202201/harry-cooper-on-jasper-johns-87450>; see also Basualdo & Rothkopf, *supra* note 3, at 174 (“By casting the original object and minutely rendering its trademark labels, Johns engaged the old saw of art as a mirror of the world Johns wryly presents two cans side by side as if to highlight the duplicative function of industry, the artist, and the casting process.”). To put this equivalence in Borgesian terms, the single sculpture bisects two parallel lines at their midpoints or reveals that there is, indeed, only one line.

¹² At least in the case of the painting *Mirror’s Edge 2*, the galaxy depicted is reported to be M101, which is “[t]wice as large as our own Milky Way.” Deborah Solomon, “All the World in a ‘Slice’ of Art,” *N.Y. Times* (Sept. 13, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/13/arts/design/slice-jasper-johns.html>.

¹³ Basualdo & Rothkopf, *supra* note 3, at 254.

¹⁴ See Michael Ann Holly, “Of Late,” in Basualdo & Rothkopf, *supra* note 3, at 276, 278 (reading the skeleton with a top hat as Johns and noting that “[s]ome great artists confront ‘the end’ courageously, bathed in a feeling of peace (as Said intimated), but Johns faces it

with both ‘a grin and a grimace’’).

¹⁵ SE vol. 17 at 234–35.

¹⁶ Id. at 235.

¹⁷ Id. at 236–37, 241, 248 n.1.

¹⁸ Commentators use the word “uncanny” with striking frequency to refer to the experience Johns’s art creates, whether or not they mean to use the term in its Freudian context. E.g., Carroll Dunham, “Face Time,” in Basualdo and Rothkopf, *supra* note 3, at 246, 246 (in discussing the painting *Montez Singing*, which features a distorted face); Jennifer L. Roberts, “Casting Blind,” in Basualdo and Rothkopf, *supra* note 3, at 168, 170 (in discussing the large painting (or sculpture) *According to What*); Scott Rothkopf, “Jasper Johns: Mind/Mirror,” in Basualdo & Rothkopf, *supra* note 3, at 16, 17 (in discussing *Painted Bronze*); Smee, *supra* note 10 (in discussing Johns’s use of doubling in general); see also Cooper, *supra* note 11 (in discussing the Whitney’s reflective-trim gallery containing *Painted Bronze*). To be sure, commentators also sometimes explicitly cite Freud’s essay in unpacking various Johnsian motifs. E.g., Jeffrey Weiss, *Body Double: Jasper Johns / Bruce Nauman* (2013), <https://stepgraphics.com/book-pdfs/Body-Double-Johns-Nauman.pdf> (discussing how Johns’s use of media (such as casting) that render the body’s physicality both palpable and estranged evokes the dual familiarity and unfamiliarity of the uncanny, as set out in Freud’s essay).

¹⁹ SE vol. 17 at 237–38.

²⁰ Id. at 230–32; see also Roberts, *supra* note 18, at 169–70 (relating Johns’s use of casting as a medium that problematizes visual perception

to the absence of eyes in *Target with Four Faces*). Somewhat uncannily, Freud’s derivation of this fear is introduced through his reading of Hoffman’s story “The Sand-Man,” in which the eponymous, malevolent character “throws handfuls of sand in [children’s] eyes” to dislodge their eyes. SE vol. 17 at 228. The Frank O’Hara poem featured in *Skin with O’Hara Poem* ends with the lines “the sand inevitably seeks the eye / and it is the same eye.”

²¹ SE vol. 17 at 238.

²² Rothkopf, *supra* note 18, at 17. The exhibition catalogue’s emphasis on the perdurance of Johns’s work foregrounds the fact that this is one of the last major retrospectives of Johns’s work—if not, indeed, the last one—that will occur before he dies (even as the catalogue ostensibly distances itself from this consideration): “I remember an early conversation about the exhibition with Johns, in which I pointed out that when the show opened he would be ninety. I stumbled over whether to use the simple future or conditional tense. He paused before answering with his usual precision, ‘The possibility of my future existence has nothing to do with this show.’ He was right, of course. It’s the art that lives on.” Id. at 18.

²³ Basualdo offers a helpful description of this well-known feature of Johns’s art: “[Johns’s] paintings, sculptures, prints, and drawings usually present themselves to the viewer as a totality, self-contained, calling for close examination. Upon that, they reveal themselves as layered, scrupulously encrypted with the time and accidents of their own making, a deliberate collection of premeditated marks erased by other marks.” Basualdo, *supra* note 7, at 325.



Inna Danieli, LCSW, MBA, A Fragment from the
Book of Transferential Tea (2019).

From the Couch to the Paintbrush

Inna Danieli, LCSW, MBA
NJl Advanced Candidate

Some of you may have heard of the children's story about a boy with a magic paintbrush. In the story, whatever the boy painted with his brush would come alive: the bridge, the horse, the house This boy's story portrays a real-life experience for me when I immerse myself in my art world—my cozy art corner just outside of my therapy office door. Me and my daydreams.

The experience of daydreaming with my hands is familiar to me from working with Jungian sand box therapy for over ten years. This work with the sand box precedes even my first class at NJl in 2011—in which Jack Debrot invited us, a group of first-year candidates, to allow the unrestricted, free-associative flow of thoughts. It took me a few tries to actually feel the freedom of that technique as I mastered it in years to come during my journey as a candidate. I quickly realized that my free associations were heavily infused by visuals—memories, faces, colors that would rapidly appear in my mind and, eventually, help connect the dots of the unconscious thinking process.

As a multilingual individual, I am often asked in what language I dream at night. I always have the same answer: I dream in the universal language of visuals. My dreams are

Expanding psychoanalysis to wider horizons of art journaling

pictures, stories and movies, episodes that have colors, people, feelings, and experiences. My awareness of the impact of images on the psyche grew with each year of practicing psychoanalysis. I often quoted Aristotle: "We think in pictures. If you wish to change what you think, change the picture," he wrote. And one lucky day, approximately five years ago, I found the magic paintbrush that allowed me to express and modify the daydream that emerges from the depths of my soul in a visual form.

This paintbrush is called art journaling. Art journaling (or visual journaling) is a technique of expressing yourself on paper (primarily on paper—however, other media such as fabric, leaves, etc. can be utilized) using visual elements that resonate with the inner state of your psyche in the present moment. For example, use of your non-dominant hand in drawing or writing creates a completely different outcome on the page than using the well-controlled dominant hand. It is one of the best practices for letting go of control and accepting the outcome the way it appears in front of your eyes. "Mistakes" are precious opportunities to open your unconscious mind and look closely, similar to the "Freudian slip" moments that we therapists all appreciate so much.

Use of colors chosen in the moment is another way of uncovering your deeper self. Sometimes, cooler colors may suggest some frozen parts; and mindless flipping through old magazines may suddenly “wake” you up with an unexpected image that grabs your attention. That image will be that Aristotelian picture-changing on your page and in your mind—an experience that would not be possible without the external visual stimulation.

Art journaling in general is a multi-layered process of mixed media on paper and contains the following seven elements: lines, colors, images, shapes, text, intentions, and magical coincidences. While most of the elements are self-explanatory, the last one—magical coincidences—consists of the unexpected discoveries on your page that your psyche suddenly sees clearly. These are equivalent to the “ah-ha moments” in therapy when the clouds of the mind recede and allow us clear access to its unconscious or shadow parts.

How does the process work? The name of the game is freedom. Freely expressing, visually, the present moment of your being. At first, this is easier said than done, thanks to society, which has taught us that drawing needs to be purposeful and realistic. Your hand is supposed to follow the plan to create (preferably) pretty images of a recognizable object. But art journaling is the other way around. There is no plan and your only limitation is your own mind: you can add paper by gluing it together, you can sew a book from scratch or come back to your artwork days or years later. There are no rules. Your hands are free to create the unplanned visuals in front of your eyes. You only follow what your soul feels like in that very moment, and you allow it to come alive.

The satisfaction of the process is the replica

of the analytical process on the couch—unrestricted and flowing. Your therapist is indeed the blank slate (paper) in front of you that slowly becomes your projected identity, your thoughts, and various parts of yourself. The Jungian concept of shadow (the hidden parts of the self and the parts that we prefer not to accept) are gently peeking and smiling at you from the page. You have choices: you can emphasize and emboss these parts to make them come alive, and become visible and integrated into who you are, or you can allow them only to sneak a peek into the page without giving them your full attention, if you are not ready yet to meet them. Moreover, it is your decision whether you want to cover these parts up with another gently or roughly torn image that caught your attention, or, instead, pour additional opaque acrylic color (a defense?) on them—it is all part of the process that slowly heals your soul on a very deep level.

As my analytical mind follows the process of art creation, I notice and acknowledge the choices that I make on the page: do I drip the highly pigmented watercolor on a heavily wet page, letting go of control? Or do I use a black Sharpie marker to define and emphasize the lines that represent boundary-setting on paper and in life? Do I feel the need to add actual words—which by definition are communication at a higher level than symbols and images? And, if so, what language do I use? Do I write the words in a way that an accidental reader can decode them, or do I use the mysterious graffiti style that only I could understand? During my recent vacation in Egypt, I was working in my travel journal on an Egyptair flight. I was inspired by the shapes of Arabic calligraphy and had a strong urge to add curvy Arabic writing to my page, already filled with the math-like hieroglyphic symbols from the famous Abu Simbel temples and the

rich ancient tombs. Due to the absence of an Internet connection on the flight, I used what I had: I copied the curvy shape of Arabic letters from the sign in front of my seat; and now “Fasten your seat belt” is part of my journey to freedom The visual of it carried more weight in that moment on the flight than the meaning of the words—or maybe not?

The process of art journaling involves dreaming with your gazing eyes while your hands move: it brings in the day residue as well as long-forgotten, submersed childhood memories, deep wishes, and fears, mixed together in layers of meaning that are slowly uncovered, piece by piece. Some pages are forgotten, and some hold a life-changing meaning to me.

Above is a page from my journal that was created with used tea bags. The warm colors of the used tea bags with some remains of the sprinkles of the tea leaves that were touched by the heat of water and that once warmed my belly now become the background for the free expression of my dream. Following lines with a marker and seeing figures come out of the page is a magical feeling that makes the moment present and complete.

On a practical note: I use art journaling to “unload” my countertransference after difficult sessions. These types of expressions remind me of D.W. Winnicott’s paper “Hate in the Counter-Transference” (1949), where he describes a dream that helped him process and understand his growing hate toward a patient. The art journal pages allow me to see my own visual version of a dream like the one described by Winnicott. I also often make quick stops by my art corner for general self-care. Even a few minutes of holding a brush in my hands creates a “holding” or “transitional” space in between

sessions with patients and other activities. The journals have been extremely handy during the pandemic. Paper can hold it all. I hope that my story will spark curiosity and may inspire others to explore the field of art journaling.

For Want of a Chocolate and Vanilla Ice Cream Sundae

Burton Norman Seidler, PhD

I was a young, brash, yet naïve kid in the 1960s. Bright-eyed, bushy-tailed, and filled with idealism but little else in the way of understanding the world and having practical knowhow. However, I did know people who did have ideas about how to effect positive transformations. So I became a quiet tag-along supporter, willing to march on Washington against the Vietnam War, stand up in favor of civil rights and demonstrate on account of women's rights. This didn't occur in a vacuum devoid of context. Prior to that, there were many experiences that contributed to my advocacy for, and participation in, the above causes.

For example, I remember a college classmate of mine, who was majoring in religious studies no less, coming up to me and spontaneously feeling my head. (Somebody told him that Jews had horns.) I recall another occasion, when I was in elementary school, when my father, my Uncle Murray, and I were driving up to Howe Caverns, in Cobleskill, New York, when, all of a sudden, my Uncle tried to cover my eyes with his hand to prevent me from seeing a sign on somebody's property saying "No dogs or Jews allowed." I saw it anyhow, despite his laudable attempt to protect me.

Those events were disconcerting enough, to be

sure, but somehow I managed to push them to the side and out of conscious awareness. However, one incident, in particular, woke me from my child-like reverie comfort zone—*where everything is taken care of and all is well with the world.*

When I was in my teens, I was in southern Illinois with some friends. I suggested that we get some ice cream—still one of my favorite pursuits. We found a small ice cream shop, sat down and waited, and waited, and waited some more, even though we were the *only* customers in the place. Although I was from New York City and was used to rapid service, I initially reasoned that this was the Midwest and that things moved at a more leisurely, more human, pace. As a matter of fact, I had begun to get used to being less rushed and harried than what routinely took place in the Big Apple. Secretly, I even enjoyed the calmer, less frenetic tempo. But I soon realized that this was different. This exceeded what could be considered to be a *less frantic pace*. This made sloths look like speed demons, and tortoises like Olympic track stars. After close to an hour had elapsed with no service, I hesitantly went up to the counter and spoke to the person in charge. I respectfully explained to him that we all had been waiting patiently (an understatement, if there ever was one), but

no one even came over to our table to take our order. I then, politely, added that we would like some ice cream.

To this day, I will never forget what the “gentleman” (if he can be called that) said to me, all with a straight-faced, serious demeanor. “I’ll be glad to serve **you**,” with an unmistakable emphasis on the word **you**. It was then that my youthful innocence was shattered. It had not dawned on me until that moment that my friends were not going to be served and the reason, although unspoken, was loudly screaming in my ears. I could no longer remain in my dream world. I was forced to face a grim reality. I could be served, but they would not be. My friends were Black. I thought to myself that this was Illinois, not the Deep South, like Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and so on, where prejudice and its twin—segregation—openly flourished. This was Illinois, for goodness’ sake! I did not expect this to happen here! Well, this supposedly urbane New York City kid ought to have known better. Insofar as my belief that as a New York City denizen I had some real-world sophistication was concerned, I was merely a legend in my own mind. Utterly ashamed and my tail between my legs, I approached my friends. I told them that we would not be served. I apologized and said “let’s get out of here.”

Unwittingly, I had led them into a trap. Whatever hopes they may have had were now dashed. Yet, in spite of this, *they* were the ones to console *me*. They said that they were used to this and that they felt bad for me. This was a very rude awakening, and perhaps it was rightful that I had this comeuppance. I certainly never forgot that incident—or others like it—and vowed that I would someday find a way to speak out about it. So, I marched,

carried signs, got involved in all manner of peaceful demonstrations. I was proud of my involvement. In something bigger and better than me. And, I was hopeful that things could and would change for the better. It felt inevitable. Goodness, after all, was on our side. Right?

But a series of incidents happened, horrible ones, that interrupted the positive, hard-fought changes and gains that people were making in America. President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. A few months earlier, Medgar Evers had been murdered. Then Malcolm X was slain, which was followed a couple of years later by the murder of Martin Luther King, and then Bobby Kennedy was gunned down.

It seemed as if, from that period on, an important part of America died after it had only begun to unearth its soul. We became more materialistic, competitive, driven by greed, and more concerned about personal gain than developing communal values. Greed was now considered to be good. Our soul, our sense of compassion, and with it, empathy, caring and humanism, all were buried and out of sight—that is, until recently, when history repeated itself, this time with a different generation, filled with its own brand of enthusiasm, energy, and determination.

There is a movement that is sweeping this country, a much needed one, a virtuous one, one that has been dormant and put on hold for far too long. We all saw Mr. Floyd’s life being taken away from him right before our eyes—and something was reawakened. When we could no longer live in denial, or were unable to dissociate from past traumas, we reminded ourselves of the lives of countless others who were sadistically and callously snatched away. I will say some of their names, knowing full

well that there have been many more: Ahmaud Arbery, Freddie Gray, Atatiana Jefferson, Trayvon Martin, Breonna Taylor, Pamela Turner, and on and on.

And, much like a volcano that contains its burning passions internally until it can no longer hold them down must explode one day, this generation (even in the midst of a deadly pandemic) unleashed its ardent quest for justice and took to the streets to protest the wrongs that were systematically visited upon fellow people. People of all faiths, colors, creeds, and political parties protested against injustice. Their call has been heard. People from all walks of life have been responding, even amid anticipated opposition.

Each of us has been called to contribute in whatever way we could in accordance with our talents, presence, prestige, position of power, financial wherewithal, and whatnot. As the Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal for the Advancement of Scientific Psychoanalytic Empirical Research (JASPER)*, I solicited papers that addressed various kinds of injustices. Accordingly, the soon-to-be published issue contains the following articles in response to the theme of “Isms, Rifts, Ruptures and Rips in America’s Social Fabric”: *The Scandal of Whiteness Theory*, by Jon Mills; *Reflections on Healing the Wounds of Racial Trauma in Clinical Practice*, by Willard Ashley; *On Antisemitism*, by Alexander Levy; *The Rhinoceros and the Rowboat (Part II)*, *A Qualitative Analysis of Themes of Irreality in Word Press Accounts of Modern Dictators*, by William R. Meyers; *Childism and Magnarchy: Making Conscious the Power of Liberatory Play in Psychoanalysis*, by Aleisa Myles & Mariel Stadick; and *Humor: Boon or Bane, or Both? A Proposal for Measuring its Effects on Belonging and Attitudes*, by Burton Seitler.

In addition, this issue contains a timely book review written by Jack Schwartz entitled *Seeing Past the Lies: The Murderous Coup of 1898 and the Rise of White Supremacy*, written by David Zucchino.

Electing to print these articles in *JASPER* as its Editor-in-Chief represents a modest, but hopefully meaningful contribution to equal rights and justice, as well as my conviction that this material will convey our fidelity to, and relentless pursuit of, the truth. Furthermore, it is my hope that *JASPER* can ultimately affirm the principle that the pen is mightier than the sword.

Since Our Last Session

Christine M. Snyder, LCSW

Soon it will be a year since my therapist passed away.

I began seeing him a few weeks after beginning introductory coursework at a psychoanalytic institute in northern New Jersey. Classmates chattered about being “candidates” and finding “analysts.” It all seemed like a mystery—what exactly was psychoanalysis?—and I was eager to begin to understand more about myself. On the recommendation of a classmate, I contacted the therapist I’m writing about here.

From the beginning, I felt confused by our sessions. They were not like other experiences I had before. During our first session, he invited me to sit on the couch or a chair; I didn’t understand until later that perhaps he was inviting me to lie on the couch, which I’d never done before. I opted to sit on a chair across from him. He was almost completely silent, and I sometimes felt bored by the sound of my own voice and self-conscious about what I talked about.

I accepted his invitation to provide him with feedback early on, but I didn’t completely know what that meant. What exactly was “feedback” and how would I go about delivering that?

Not knowing that it would be our last session, I felt a desire to more fully reveal myself and shared a vivid dream that is still alive inside me today. It felt like a dream about the future and one full of possibility.

At the end of our last session, he became unusually talkative. He shared that he was feeling disconnected due to something that had nothing to do with me. Something felt very wrong. I felt myself beginning to cry. “I know you can’t tell me,” I said, “but I know something is wrong and I don’t know what to do.” I felt alarm bells going off in my insides, almost as if I were reading something in him that frightened me. He indicated that he might not make our appointment next week. When our call ended, it was as if I knew I would never see him again.

When I learned he had passed away, naturally, I was shocked. But I also admit that there were a few things I observed in our sessions that made me wonder about his health. I never felt like it was my business to ask him about them. I feared I’d make him uncomfortable, even though I had no way of knowing he would feel that way.

He still resides inside me. It saddens me that his life was seemingly snuffed out so abruptly when he still had decades left to live. I sometimes wonder where I would be emotionally if he were still here. But I find comfort in my spirituality. I believe he can see me still, from wherever he is. I believe he knows that I think of him. And something tells me that he would be pleased to see what I’ve been up to in this last year.

A Congratulations

Robert Mollinger, PhD

Congratulations to Joel and Neil for creating, nurturing, and leading a psychoanalytic institute that has thrived for 50 years.

Both Joel and Neil had links to NPAP in New York City and were generously open to having NPAP members join them in New Jersey. Consequently, I was invited to join in the late 1970s and was luckily on board for the first graduating class, a class which exhibited and foretold the high quality and competence of NJI's graduates.

Joel, I believe, was mostly responsible for the curriculum side of the training, and I at first assisted Len Strahl (also from NPAP) in the Writing Seminar, a course near the end of candidate training to assist candidates in preparation for their final case essay. This course was one of the first of its kind in psychoanalytic institutes. Soon thereafter, I began teaching a course, created by Joel, on the autistic and schizoid characters, which included Joel's essay "The Autistic Character" (published in *The Psychoanalytic Review* in 1975); later, this course covered narcissistic issues.

Neil, I believe, was mostly responsible for the clinical side of the training; his own clinical office was on site at the clinic space on Catalpa Ave. He was extremely helpful to the candidates using offices at the Clinic and to me personally when I began seeing private patients and doing supervision and control work at NJI.

Both Joel and Neil were not only open to new members of NJI but also to allowing them to assume more and more responsibilities over time: in my case, first faculty, then Training Committee, supervisor, control analyst, then (if I remember correctly) Director of Final Essay. It is thus very gratifying to see this tradition continuing as each generation at NJI assumes the leadership of the Institute.

The atmosphere of the Institute was congenial and cooperative, in contrast to the divisiveness and argumentativeness which sometimes marks psychoanalytic institutes. The faculty and the candidates were working together to make a successful institute that fostered both professional and personal growth for all. It certainly did for me and hopefully will continue to do for others.

Remembering Joel Bernstein

Lorna Goldberg, LCSW, PsyA

When I was asked to write about Joel Bernstein for this commemorative publication, I reflected on how best to convey his impact on me for more than 40 years. Joel was an analyst, a teacher, and a leader. I appreciate this opportunity to share some of my memories of all three.

At the end of his life, Joel wrote a book where he shared his clinical approach to working with his patients. Many of us are grateful that Joel's wife, Dr. Nita Lutwak, ensured the posthumous publication of that book. *Some Small Truths* reveals Joel's clinical wisdom and the depth of his knowledge, and it offers a sense of his funny, ironic, and creative personality. It explains Joel's approach to psychoanalysis, which I experienced firsthand.

In 1976, I began my training at the Institute, and I started my analysis with Joel. For the most part, I was content with my life. However, periodically, seemingly out of the blue, a black cloud would descend over me. I would burst into tears, triggered by feelings of overwhelming despair and emptiness. These moments appeared to be disconnected from the rest of my life.

There are no more black clouds. Instead, although there are times—particularly during this time of COVID and political strife—when I feel sad or discouraged in response to life events; if my feelings intensify, I find some relief by examining and challenging underlying

beliefs and fantasies attached to those emotions.

How did I change? It was my good fortune to have a relationship with a kind analyst who helped me feel safe exploring rather than defending against uncomfortable feelings. Joel helped me by focusing on character traits expressed in therapy sessions. These character traits worked a good percentage of the time. However, I came to see how they undermined my ability to react to life in the moment with flexibility and authenticity. These traits were based upon assumptions that often were incorrect. The more I addressed my character traits and their underlying assumptions, the less I experienced my black cloud moments.

In *Some Small Truths*, Joel writes:

A person comes to treatment for all kinds of problems. But soon the problems devolve into some fundamental behaviors that are repeated over and over and, no matter how problematic, cannot be controlled. These repetitive behaviors are called character traits. It is these core behaviors, these character traits, which prove to lie at the base of the person's problems. And now the person must face the truth about his/her character traits if he is to resolve his problems. He must first acknowledge his character traits and then trace their history back to their origins. Now the person finds that these character traits trace back to the

pleasures of childhood: it was these pleasures that caused these behaviors to be repeated over and over and to be secured into the psyche as character traits (p. 23).

I discovered that my black cloud (my symptom) served as a container of emotions and unconscious beliefs that weren't acceptable to me. Instead, I usually appeared to be upbeat and smiling. One day, early in therapy, Joel commented on my fixed smile while I was speaking about something troubling. Joel was able to use his induced countertransference (a countertransference feeling that any analyst with a particular patient would experience) to recognize that something was amiss. After recognizing my incongruous behavior, we explored its meaning. Eventually, we discovered that my sometimes inappropriate smile was connected to a previously unconscious belief (an oedipal fantasy) that my father would be pleased with me if I smiled instead of showing anger or distress. In my therapy session, Joel helped me access the underlying fantasies and memories at their genesis by addressing this character trait. My smiling became less ego-syntonic and more ego-dystonic as I became aware that behavior that appeared to work early in childhood could, at times, undermine my present life. I have remained a person who smiles easily. However, as we deconstructed my character armor, I became more a productive and serious person.

This is the outcome Joel describes in *Some Small Truths*:

So, the character traits that seem so problematic, with anxiety, anger, depression, reveal themselves to be sources of great, though unconscious, pleasure . . . The discovery of the character traits

that are central to one's character is called character analysis (p. 23).

Throughout my analysis, I experienced transference reactions toward Joel as I brought past feelings into my relationship with him. Even during a negative transference reaction, I appreciated how he reliably handled my strong responses to him in his nonjudgmental way and thus attenuated my transference expectations. Joel always observed and explored my reactions to him rather than shutting me down. His nondefensive and observational approach allowed me to gain insight into my misplaced expectations. This experience enabled me to become more comfortable with and attuned to my patients' inevitably powerful transference reactions to me as a therapist.

Joel was an analyst brave enough to tell his patients uncomfortable truths. I usually smiled or laughed when he touched upon something that resonated within me. However, I sometimes disagreed with him, and I generally was ready for a spirited debate. This interaction, in which Joel was fully present and respectfully listened to my point of view, ultimately allowed me to feel more comfortable asserting myself in other situations and has influenced my therapy with my own patients.

In sessions, Joel could look at himself and then laugh at himself with ease; thus, he served, for patients and students, as a model for self-acceptance. He was a psychoanalyst who never took himself too seriously. As his book indicates, Joel created an atmosphere where patients could appreciate the unconscious revealed in their slips, neologisms, dreams, and characteristic responses. Right there on the pages, the reader can see that Joel's short, often humorous case vignettes resulted from

a therapeutic partnership of curiosity and growing acceptance of previously forbidden unconscious beliefs. And, of course, it was fun for me to scan the book to see the accuracy with which I was portrayed.

Reading *Some Small Truths*, I am also reminded of Joel's love of etymology. Joel kept a massive Cambridge Dictionary on a stand in his office. He often spent parts of sessions looking up the definitions of various words I had used. He considered how these definitions and earlier iterations could be linked to the unconscious. At the same time, Joel, a trained pianist, paid attention to the timbre of speech—focusing on *how* the words were said.

Joel's diligent work demonstrated that he was not one to be glib about who a person was. I learned that it was necessary to explore many avenues to arrive at the truth. Instead of quickly using theory to understand his patients, Joel paid careful attention, in sessions, to the individuality of each of them and let insights gained in the treatment room lead to the theory. Joel was not one to be enamored of the latest psychoanalytic fad. However, his use of induced countertransference to address his patient's character can be seen as linking to later developments in psychoanalytic theory.

As I've indicated, Joel's attention to detail led him to be an analyst who seemed prescient in addressing somatic behavior. This was part of his attunement to the multiple ways in which character was expressed. For example, Joel noticed my tendency to stiffen my body when anxious, which resulted in muscle pain. As a result of exploring the etiology of my somatic behavior, I have learned to better tolerate my anxiety, and my muscle pain has stopped.

Although he was the director of two

psychoanalytic institutes, there was nothing high and mighty about Joel. Despite his brilliance, he was down-to-earth and approachable. Joel was comfortable with himself, and he always was open to learning from his students. At NJI and the Institute for Psychoanalytic Studies, Joel was an engaging teacher. Joel's pleasure in teaching was contagious. He enjoyed his students, and they enjoyed him. Joel developed and taught courses on character analysis and induced countertransference. Each class focused on his psychoanalytic technique. He also taught a course on psychoanalytic psychopathology. This course allowed students to appreciate how a diagnosis is not simply a set of symptoms. Joel introduced his students to the richness of psychodynamic formulations of personality and psychopathology that contrasted with the listing of symptoms found in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. These psychoanalytic formulations emerged from learning of multiple possibilities from reading Fenichel and, also, from the treatment setting in which Joel used induced transference feelings to identify and investigate character. Understanding Joel's approach broadened his students' awareness of multiple possibilities for their patients.

Within Joel's classes, his students were also learning about Freud. Joel loved Freud, and through his approach, he provided his students and patients with a great appreciation for the father of psychoanalysis. However, although libido theory was at the back of his mind, Joel's theory, gleaned from the clinical setting, sometimes would lead him in a different direction.

Joel said of Freud in his book:

Freud was not so much a discoverer as

he was a conqueror of the resistances that blocked discovery of his own and our own phylogenetic, primal knowledge . . . Freud became a magnificent learner, if you will, by conquering the resistances to knowing what was evident in the world but deposited in the unconscious. And, by extension, we can now define learning as overcoming the resistances to knowing or, better, recovering what is already known (p. 143).

After rereading Joel's words about Freud, I can see that writing this tribute has allowed me to recover a panoply of character traits and accomplishments that are already known about Joel. As a matter of fact, when the word *panoply* came to me, for some reason, I felt the need to look it up in my Random House Unabridged Dictionary. (I can't imagine why I felt the need to do so!) *Panoply's* definition is "a wide-ranging and impressive array or display" (p. 1402). *Panoply* is derived from the Greek word *panoplia* meaning a full complement of armor. My thoughts led me to say that Joel used his wide-ranging and impressive array of character traits to help those of us who were his patients and students to put down our armor as we began to feel understood; and, as a result, we became more knowledgeable, competent, and peaceful in this world.

references

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A Conversation with Neil Wilson



drawings by LDC

800 Catalpa Ave.

As we celebrate NJI's fiftieth birthday, we honor our co-founders, Joel Bernstein, PhD and Neil Wilson, PhD. These two psychologists met while training at the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis (NPAP). It was their dream to create a place that provided extensive psychoanalytic training to a wide range of interested candidates.

NJI's first class was in September 1972. The instructors were Joel Bernstein, Neil Wilson, and Micaella Babakin, MSW.

In 1980, NJI was incorporated as a non-profit organization under the name of The Psychoanalytic Training Institute of New

Jersey, and, soon after, the Institute settled into its first home, a Dutch colonial house at 800 Catalpa Ave. in Teaneck. In 2008, NJI moved to its current location at 121 Cedar Lane in Teaneck.

Neil Wilson offered *Viewpoints* some reflections in light of the milestone that this semicentennial marks for NJI.

Viewpoints: What inspired you and Joel to create a psychoanalytical institute in New Jersey?

NW: Joel and I met in a class at the NPAP. Since we both lived in New Jersey, we

took turns driving each other to classes. We got to know each other, and mutual respect grew. At some point, Joel came up with the idea of us starting a branch of NPAP in Teaneck. I initially thought he was acting grandiose. He kept pushing it, and I finally agreed. We were a branch of the NPAP, but nothing came of that aspect.

Analysts from New York initially taught in Teaneck. They included Alan Roland, Art Robbins, Helen Goldberg, and Bob Mollinger. Over the years, we developed our own highly respected teachers. After 50 years, proudly, we are still going strong.

Viewpoints: What was the climate surrounding psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic training in 1972?

NW: The climate for psychoanalysis has always been questionable. It is a given that it is mocked, admired, extremely helpful, sometimes scary. In those days, and even now, many of the psychoanalytic students were our patients. I remember two local universities openly criticizing our school. The power of the unconscious is often experienced as a bad joke.

Viewpoints: How do you feel the field has

changed since 1972, and how do you see those changes?

NW: Originally, our patients would be three- or four-times-a-week clients. This has changed dramatically. Partially, this change is due to the dictates of insurance companies. They usually won't cover multiple sessions per week. One important exception is Medicare.

Viewpoints: What are your wishes and hopes for NJI's future?

NW: I feel quite confident that we will continue to thrive. After 50 years, we have discovered that so many are helped by psychoanalysis. Our teachers and graduates are top-level people, and we should be proud of our accomplishments. The major danger is a minimizing of Freud's legacy to us.

Viewpoints: What advice would you give our candidates as they embark on their journey to become future psychoanalysts?

NW: I have the usual advice for our students. Read and learn as much as you can, use your own analytic experience to grow and help others, stand up for all of us, spread the word, and lead a good life.

The Talking Cure

It is odd to converse with a man who is terse
He may be adverse to talking in verse
But to talk and be terse
Is simply the reverse
And might deserve a curse
He well may need a nurse
Since nothing is worse

Neil Wilson, PhD



left to right: Joel Bernstein (co-founder of NJI), Martin Bergmann, Oscar Sternbach, Neil Wilson (co-founder of NJI), Art Gottdiener

in memoriam:

Joel Bernstein (co-founder of NJI)
 Les Barbanell
 Alice Bard
 Harriet Diamond
 Helaine Ambrose Dorion
 Norman Ellman
 Art Gottdiener
 Linda Johnston
 Selma Latner
 Henry Lawton
 Abe Matus
 Rhoda S. Ritter
 Marcia H. Rosen
 Alfred M. Rubenstein
 Rose D. Pedowitz
 Leonard Strahl

I've loved, I've laughed, and cried
 I've had my fill, my share of losing
 And now, as tears subside
 I find it all so amusing
 To think I did all that
 And may I say, not in a shy way
 "Oh no, oh no, not me
 I did it my way"*

*Frank Sinatra, My Way, on My Way (Reprise 1968).

