

## ACCESS TO PSYCHOANALYTIC IDEAS IN AMERICAN UNDERGRADUATE INSTITUTIONS

To determine the prevalence of teaching about psychoanalytic ideas in the undergraduate curricula of 150 highly ranked colleges and universities, a software-based search was conducted to find references to psychoanalytic content in published course catalogues. Results showed that psychoanalytic ideas were represented somewhere in the curricula of most (though not all) of these schools, and that overall there were many times more courses featuring psychoanalytic ideas outside psychology departments than within them. The data also suggest that there are regional differences in the likelihood an undergraduate will encounter psychoanalytic ideas at these schools. Though psychoanalytic ideas are available in some form in most of these schools' psychology departments, the average number of courses per school is small. At the same time, psychoanalytic ideas have found applications in many areas of the humanities and social sciences. The nature of the presentation of psychoanalytic ideas in these areas, however, may often be unfamiliar to clinically oriented analysts, as seen in examples of the courses that were found. Challenges and opportunities of the current academic climate vis-à-vis organized psychoanalysis are described and various suggestions made regarding how analysts can engage the academic world to its benefit.

**T**he question of where psychoanalytic ideas have a foothold within American academic institutions—especially colleges and universities

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Jonathan Redmond, Ph.D. candidate, Deakin University. Michael Shulman, associate faculty, Michigan Psychoanalytic Institute; adjunct faculty, University of Michigan, Madonna University, and University of Toledo.

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devoted to the liberal arts education of undergraduates—is currently an open question. But it is an issue that has concerned some within the American Psychoanalytic Association sufficiently to cause the formation of a Task Force on Undergraduate Education (TFUE), a working group comprising analysts, educators, students, and other interested parties, whose mission is to find ways to increase the exposure of American undergraduate students to psychoanalytic ideas (Gourguechon and Hansell 2006). After discussions with an outside consultant, a specific focus of TFUE became how “to reach and captivate the 10,000 best minds of the next generation with the power of psychoanalytic ideas” (p. 12). By focusing on the brightest undergraduates, who are tacitly assumed to be those most likely to be in positions of influence and leadership in the future, TFUE proposes that the “10,000 Minds Project” will help firmly establish the relevance of psychoanalytic ideas for both current and future generations (Bauer 2006).

Consistent with the task of learning more about the educational opportunities available to these students, a research project was designed to investigate the present status of teaching about psychoanalytic ideas across all departments in the highly ranked undergraduate institutions where they would be most likely to enroll. We sought to determine the overall *prevalence* of teaching about psychoanalytic ideas, as well as the specific *location* of psychoanalytic ideas within these schools, which fall into three types: private colleges, private universities, and public universities.

Although we knew from our own experience and that of colleagues that psychoanalytic thinking had found a niche in an array of academic disciplines, no empirical studies had been conducted to determine the full breadth of this array. We believed we would find that psychoanalytic ideas have found homes across liberal arts curricula, but we also suspected that they might not be easy to find in psychology departments (Gourguechon and Hansell 2005; Hansell 2005).

Our own experience has been that psychology departments typically offer little coursework on psychoanalysis, and that most often it is mentioned dismissively in textbooks describing psychoanalytic ideas as scientifically invalid, or in misleading, incomplete, or simplistic ways (see also Hansell 2005; Bornstein 1988, 1995, 2001). Park and Auchincloss (2006) have surveyed the account of psychoanalysis provided in twelve introductory psychology textbooks published recently in the U.S., discovering to their surprise that “the overwhelming attitude toward psychoanalysis was one of respect and admiration” (p. 1370). After noting this finding, however,

and its disparity from the conclusions reached by reviewers of previous generations of such textbooks, Park and Auchincloss go on to write that “assertions about the actual importance of psychoanalysis were impoverished” in these texts, that the contention “that psychoanalysis is ‘bad science’ continues to be the dominant criticism of the field, appearing in all the texts in this review” (p. 1371), and that “overall, criticism of psychoanalysis continues to focus on the assertion that it does not have empirical support” (p. 1376). Finally, they report that “only three texts note Freud’s contribution to bringing unconscious mental life into the domain of scientific study. This exception is important in that it highlights the contrast we found between the presentation of Freud as the wise grandfather of psychology, admired above all others even as the specific content of his most important ideas is rejected” (pp. 1376–1377). We believe that the aggregate implication of these findings is that psychoanalysis and analytic ideas, however admired their history, are not likely to be seen as *living* contributors to the science of psychology; rather, they will be regarded by readers of these texts as “has-beens.” We believe that readers of these introductory psychology texts are likely to conclude that at this point psychoanalysis is a desiccated and dead tributary to the psychological mainstream (see Kihlstrom’s comment in one recent text that “Freud’s influence on psychology has been that of a dead weight” [Park and Auchincloss 2006, p. 1376]).

In our own survey, we wanted to learn how much information about psychoanalysis is available in the curricula of leading undergraduate institutions, in their psychology departments or elsewhere. We designed a study to answer the following questions. First, what estimates can be made of the likelihood that psychoanalytic ideas will be available somewhere in the undergraduate course offerings of these institutions? Second, in what departments and in what academic areas are psychoanalytic ideas currently being taught in these schools? Third, are there geographic differences in the likelihood of finding these ideas in the undergraduate curricula of these schools? And, fourth, by looking at specific courses identified in the study, can we get a better sense of how psychoanalytic ideas are being applied in these undergraduate curricula?

## METHODS

### *Survey*

To determine where the brightest undergraduate minds might most likely seek their education, we used the 2006 *U.S. News and World Report*

rankings of the top fifty private colleges, the top fifty private universities, and the top fifty public universities in the nation.<sup>1</sup>

With this list in hand, we considered various methods for surveying these institutions' course offerings for psychoanalytic content and determined that it would be expeditious to use a software-based search method. We chose keywords related to psychoanalysis and used a readily available software tool to locate these keywords in course catalogues, which could be downloaded online. The database "College Source Online" was used to access and search the course catalogues from the academic institutions on our list ([www.collegesource.org](http://www.collegesource.org)). This database provides an online "one-stop shop" for information about universities and colleges, including course catalogues. We used these course catalogues exclusively, because of their being available in one place and their common formatting in PDF (Adobe Reader™ 7) format. This ensured that all the documents were easily searchable using the software search function resident in the Adobe program.

#### **Keywords**

Using the PDF downloads of the course catalogues, our search method consisted of searching each document for five keywords. These keywords were chosen by consensus of the investigators, in consultation with other psychoanalytic educators and, in addition, several members of TFUE. The five keywords were selected as representing the most likely terms referencing the presence of psychoanalytic content in course catalogues. These keywords are all "wildcard" terms ("wildcard" is a search term taken from computer science designating a symbol that finds one or more unspecified but related targets) that allow location of all noun, verb, and adjective derivatives of root concept terms. The five keywords chosen for our research were "psychoanaly\*," "psychodynam\*," "Freud\*," "Lacan\*," and "Erikson\*."<sup>2</sup> As an example of how

<sup>1</sup>*U.S. News and World Report* ranks undergraduate institutions using formulas that include such factors as peer assessment, graduation and retention rate, faculty resources, student selectivity, financial resources, and alumni giving. A full account of this ranking methodology is available at the *U.S. News and World Report* website: [www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/rankings/rankindex\\_brief.php](http://www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/rankings/rankindex_brief.php)

<sup>2</sup>We considered as additional keyword wildcards but discarded, given the search resources available to us, "Jung\*," "Kohut\*," "self psycholog\*," "Klein\*," "Winnicott\*," "ego psycholog\*," and "object relat\*." We reasoned that the likelihood of occurrence of these keywords in the absence of any of the five we did select was low. However, we cannot rule out that we might have missed courses with psychoanalytic content to which these additional keywords would have pointed us. We also cannot claim that our survey is a comprehensive one—i.e., that it allows us to uncover

the “wildcard” term “psychoanaly\*” works, the root “psychoanaly-” is found in each of the words “psychoanalysis,” “psychoanalyze,” and “psychoanalytic,” allowing a search using the “wildcard” to pick up all word forms of the root concept, whether noun, verb, or adjective, in a given searched document.

#### ***Currency of Course Catalogues and Length of Catalogue Descriptions***

Although College Source Online obtains the most recent course catalogues it can, its catalogue roster is not always current. We accepted the convention of using only course catalogues for the academic year 2001–2002 or later. This led us to omit four schools from our original list of 150 (2.67 percent of the original sample).

A final methodological consideration relates to the use of course descriptions for our keyword search. Different academic institutions provide course descriptions of varying length, a factor that can affect the probability of our finding the keywords we selected. This variation in course description length was classified into three groups: no course descriptions (i.e., the catalogue lists only course titles, with no further description); course descriptions of two sentences or fewer; and course descriptions containing more than two sentences (see Table 2).

A review of these data suggests that universities both public and private provide somewhat lower quantities of catalogue-accessible information about course contents than do private colleges, with public universities providing less content than private ones. These discrepancies suggest that we have likely missed some psychoanalytic content in universities, and probably a somewhat greater amount in public than in private institutions.

## **RESULTS**

As noted above, four schools on our list of 150—two private universities and two public universities—could not be sampled, as the latest available course descriptions were published prior to the academic year 2001–2002. In addition, thirteen schools that were sampled yielded no keyword

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all references to psychoanalytic ideas in the course offerings of the institutions we have studied. Such comprehensiveness could be claimed only for a study that reviewed not only catalogue course descriptions but all course syllabuses—an extraordinarily resource-intensive undertaking, since no one-source databank of such syllabi is available.

**Table 1. Keywords and Courses With Identified Psychoanalytic Content Across Academic Institutions**

Type of Academic Institution	Keywords	Number of Courses	Range of Number of Courses Identified per Institution
Private Colleges	632	521	0-27
Private Universities	621	447	0-36
Public Universities	248	207	0-19
Total	1,501	1,175	

hits in our search (i.e., they show no readily identifiable courses making reference to psychoanalytic ideas). These included eight public universities, four private universities, and one private college. In summary, from our original list of 150 academic institutions we had the following result: 133 schools produced at least one keyword result (i.e., had at least one identifiable course in which something about psychoanalytic ideas was taught).

As detailed in Table 1, there were 1,501 keyword hits and 1,175 distinct courses located across all 146 academic institutions that could be searched. The number of distinct courses is smaller than the number of keyword hits due to the occurrence of more than one keyword hit in 326 course descriptions. The number of distinct courses, 1,175, represents all of the courses located in our keyword search, counting each listing of courses that were cross-listed (i.e., were listed in more than one department's offerings). Eighty-three of the 1,175 courses (7 percent of the total) were accounted for by these additional listings; the number of courses minus these duplicate listings was 1,092. For the purposes of most of the analyses in this study, however, we decided to adopt the convention of counting each listing of a cross-listed course as a separate course. We reasoned that a cross-listed course would offer access to psychoanalytic ideas to an expanded and more diverse student population.

The total of 1,175 courses located has been divided among the three types of academic institution: private colleges have the greatest number of courses and account for 44 percent of all courses located; private universities account for 38 percent of the courses; and public universities for the remaining 18 percent (subject to the caveat about university data noted above). Overall, the average total number of identified courses featuring psychoanalytic content across all schools searched is just over eight.

**Table 2. Academic Institutions and Course Description Lengths**

Academic Institution	Length of Course Description	Number of Courses	Number of Institutions
Private Colleges ( <i>N</i> = 50)	Title only—no course description	0	0
	2 sentences or fewer	9	1
	More than 2 sentences	512	49
Private Universities ( <i>N</i> = 48)	Title only—no course description	1	1
	2 sentences or fewer	32	7
	More than 2 sentences	414	40
Public Universities ( <i>N</i> = 48)	Title only—no course description	7	4
	2 sentences or fewer	45	10
	More than 2 sentences	155	34
Total		1,175	146

**Table 3. Keyword Search Hits Across All Academic Institutions**

Keyword	Number of Keywords	Percentage of Total
Psychoanaly*	642	43%
Freud*	694	46%
Lacan*	108	8%
Psychodynam*	36	2%
Erikson*	21	1%
Total	1,501	100%

In Table 3 we list the number of keyword hits that each of the five keywords received across all academic institutions. “Psychoanaly\*” and “Freud\*” account for the overwhelming majority of keyword data—89 percent—with the remaining 11 percent accounted for by “Lacan\*” (8 percent), “Psychodynam\*” (2 percent), and “Erikson\*” (1 percent).

The 1,501 keyword hits across all academic institutions were also disaggregated according to the department or academic area in which the course was offered. Within our sample we found 236 distinctly titled departments, academic areas, and interdisciplinary programs in which identifiably psychoanalytic ideas were being taught (this finding reflects a notable burgeoning of interdisciplinary studies since the 1960s). We reduced this number by defining eight distinct areas of study, collapsing this diversity into more or less traditional distinctions among areas of study: psychology, humanities, social sciences (excluding psychology),

**Table 4. Academic Areas and Number of Courses With Psychoanalytic Content Across All Academic Institutions**

Academic Area	Number of Courses	% of Courses
Psychology	148	13.6%
Humanities	650	59.5%
Social Sciences (excluding psychology)	188	17.2%
Interdisciplinary Studies	63	5.8%
Performing Arts	13	1.2%
Education	3	0.3%
Natural Sciences	6	0.5%
Miscellaneous	21	1.9%
Total*	1,092	100%

\*The total number of courses listed here does not include cross-listings.

interdisciplinary studies, performing arts, education, natural sciences, and miscellaneous (miscellaneous refers to teaching in forums such as open seminars and other nondepartmental courses that were not easily classified within the traditional areas of study listed above). We separated psychology department courses from courses in the other social sciences in order to highlight the number of courses found in psychology departments.<sup>3</sup> In Table 4 we present a breakdown of the eight academic areas in which psychoanalytic content is represented in the schools sampled.

Of the total number of courses, 13.6 percent were offered by departments of psychology; thus, a full 86.4 percent were found outside of these departments. The academic institution with the greatest number of courses with psychoanalytic content taught within its psychology department was Sarah Lawrence College (New York), with nine courses. However, this is a very unusual situation for a department of psychology. Our overall analysis showed that across our sample the median number of psychology

<sup>3</sup>We believe it likely that psychoanalytic ideas are mentioned in some form in psychology department courses more often than the published course descriptions would suggest (e.g., in introductory and abnormal psychology courses, as well as in other survey courses). However, our method of searching for psychoanalytic content is at least a “democratic” one in this sense: that it offers the same opportunity for the instructor of any course, regardless of department or academic area, to provide evidence of the presence or absence of keyword terms—i.e., for the instructor to provide an assessment of the course’s debt (or lack thereof) to psychoanalytic concepts by mentioning them (or not) in published course descriptions.



**Table 5. Geographic Regions and Courses With Psychoanalytic Content Identified Within All Academic Institutions**

Geographic Region	Number of Institutions in Each Region	Courses	Average Number of Courses per Institution
Northeast	69	729	10.5
South	25	160	6.4
West	21	193	9.1
Midwest	18	93	5.1
Total	133	1175	

courses that included the identifiable teaching of psychoanalytic content was 1.5, a figure that underscores the limited availability of analytic ideas in most psychology departments. The academic institutions with the largest number of courses in which identifiable psychoanalytic content was taught outside of psychology departments were Cornell University and the University of Pennsylvania, each of which had 35 such courses. By contrast, Cornell yielded identifiable psychoanalytic content in none of its psychology department courses, while Penn had one.

**Regional Comparisons**

We were able to use our data to roughly relate geographic location of a school to the likelihood of encountering psychoanalytic ideas in its undergraduate curricula. Our designation of geographic region—Northeast, South, West, and Midwest—followed commonly used conventions for assigning states to these regions. As Table 5 shows, the Northeast accounts for a disproportion of both the most highly ranked academic institutions and the total number of courses with psychoanalytic content. (The total number of institutions, 133, is the actual number of academic institutions where the teaching of psychoanalytic ideas could be explicitly identified from the original list of 150 schools.) The Northeast accounted for 62 percent of all courses found and 52 percent of the total number of academic institutions; the South for 14 percent of courses and 19 percent of institutions; the West, 16 percent of courses and 16 percent of institutions; and the Midwest, 8 percent of courses and 13 percent of institutions. Students attending top schools in southern and midwestern states are likely to have a more difficult time accessing psychoanalytic ideas than their peers attending schools in the Northeast and West.

## DISCUSSION

These survey findings have interesting implications for an assessment of the availability of psychoanalytic ideas in the undergraduate curricula of our country's best-known institutions. As the situation currently stands, in these institutions six times more courses featuring psychoanalytic ideas are available outside psychology departments than in them.

Park and Auchincloss (2006) have recently documented the mixed picture of psychoanalysis available to undergraduates in American introductory psychology textbooks. Much of this writing acknowledges the contributions of psychoanalysis in positive terms, yet fails to adequately characterize its central contributions or characterizes it as lacking scientific merit. Perhaps Park and Auchincloss, in finding that many of these textbooks express veneration for Freud and psychoanalysis, have come across a "turning point" in the accounts of psychoanalysis offered in these courses, one that augurs the recognition, at last, of the importance of psychoanalysis in American psychology departments and portends its brighter future in these precincts; but we have many doubts of this eventuality. We think it more likely that the unacknowledged assimilation of psychoanalytic concepts noted by Park and Auchincloss will continue, rather than that American academic psychologists as a group are about to recognize the vitality of psychoanalysis and make fuller use of its potential contributions to psychological study.

Although our survey data show that not much about psychoanalysis is available in the typical psychology department, they also show that a good deal is being taught about it in other departments. We found evidence that psychoanalytic ideas are being applied in a wide diversity of courses within both the more traditional and the newer liberal arts areas. Emerging academic disciplines in particular—film studies, queer studies, gender studies, media studies—appear to have taken up psychoanalytic ideas energetically, as we will illustrate shortly.

As we further investigated the use of psychoanalytic ideas in undergraduate education, as reflected in course descriptions from the schools in our sample, we developed the distinct impression that within the humanities and social sciences basic psychoanalytic concepts have been undergoing significant transformation by intellectual developments within the academy. As a result, clinically oriented analysts might find themselves on unfamiliar ground in encountering these new applications of psychoanalytic ideas. This difficulty becomes particularly evident in

courses in which the content is steeped in Lacanian concepts or post-modern theorizing.

To illustrate, we present a random sample of five courses from those identified by our survey. Our first example is taken from a course offered at Williams College. The course, titled “Psychoanalysis, Gender, and Sexuality,” is a cross-listed one, appearing as an offering in three different departments (English, comparative literature, and women’s and gender studies). It presents an analysis of gender, sexuality, and identity that draws on a range of textual sources (film, literature, and popular music) that represent cultures both “high” (modernist literature) and “low” (“chick flicks”):

Psychoanalytic thought offers one of the most subtle and startling accounts we have of the nature of gender and sexuality, one that suggests how inextricably sexuality is bound to language, to the limits of culture, and to the problem of identity as such. We’ll be interested in these issues in their own right; we’ll be equally interested in the surprising ways psychoanalytic thought opens up literary, cinematic and visual works—psychoanalysis is, in the end, a form of reading. The course will weave together theoretical texts and fictions from *As You Like It* to *Some Like It Hot*. We’ll explore *Antigone*, “chick flicks” and “buddy” films, courtly love lyrics and novels (Balzac, Woolf, Duras) in the light of thinkers such as Freud, Jacques Lacan, Jacqueline Rose, Leo Bersani and Lee Edelman.

This course offers novel and playful juxtapositions of cultural texts and authors, and confronts head-on one of the most basic issues in psychoanalytic theory: sexual difference. In addition, as this course is offered in three different areas of study, it is positioned to have multiple appeal in the liberal arts curriculum; thus it is accessible to a broad range of curious and intelligent students. Yet for some clinically oriented analysts at least, the notion that “psychoanalysis is, in the end, a form of reading” raises many questions (e.g., Is that the *only* thing it is “in the end”? What about its also being a form of therapy?), and a limited familiarity with the thinkers noted after Freud in this description may well feel jarring in their imagining this course and understanding the use to which it puts psychoanalytic ideas.

Another example, this one from Amherst College. The course, titled “Law’s Madness,” is offered in the nontraditional department of law, jurisprudence, and social thought, and is described as follows:

We imagine law to be a system of reason that governs and pacifies a disorderly world. And yet what if one were to re-imagine law as constituted as much by its

irrationalities as its rationality? To ask that question is to enter the language of psychoanalysis, and the theories proposed by Sigmund Freud to explain human irrationalities. Freud suggests that the human psyche is organized around the need to repress or regulate two fundamental “drives” that, if fully realized, would destroy human communities: the instincts toward aggression and sexual satisfaction. This course, following Freud, theorizes law as emerging out of and actively engaging in repressions of those fundamental drives or desires—both its own and those of the legal subjects who come before it. We will try to understand the ways in which law defines rationality, and will assess the extent to which we can assimilate law’s authority not to reason but, as Freud suggests, to the (sometimes violent) authority of the superego. We will then explore the implications of Freud’s gendering of law as the law of the father, with the further repressions that gendering entails, particularly in the landscape of sexual desire. Finally, we will speculate on the ways in which we make law an object of our own desire, which themselves depend upon the repression of law’s violence.

This course description presents, at first, an array of psychoanalytic ideas familiar to all analysts, ideas relating to drive theory, repression, sexual desire, aggression, the superego, and the formation of gender identity. As it continues, however, many analysts trained in the U.S. might wonder what exactly is meant by the phrase “Freud’s gendering of law as the law of the father,” and by the notion of making law “an object of our own desire,” unless they have some familiarity with Lacanian theory. (Some might also wonder whether the notion of “Freud’s gendering of law as the law of the father” might not represent a re-reading of Freud’s ideas through a Lacanian lens).

Another course examines Freud’s interest in Greek mythology and how this interest influenced the development of psychoanalytic theory, especially as it pertains to gender. The course, titled “Greek Myths and the Psychology of Gender,” is offered by the department of classical and medieval studies at Bates College; it is not, incidentally, cross-listed as a psychology department course, despite the phrase “Psychology of Gender” in its title. Here is the course description:

Ever since Freud argued that Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex* revealed the most important feature of human development, the Oedipal crisis, psychologists have used Greek myths to understand the human psyche and sexual difference. What do myths tell us about men, women, femaleness, maleness, in ancient Greece or today? Students examine and criticize how influential psychologists such as Freud have interpreted Greek myths and thereby influenced Western notions of gender and sex. This course emphasizes psychological interpretations of Greek myths.

This course considers fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis, including the oedipus complex, and explores how Greek mythology influenced Freud's thinking. It does not appear to feature the postmodernist influences of the courses presented above, and of all our examples is perhaps closest in method to the kind of course on Freud and mythology that might be found in the traditional curricula of psychoanalytic institutes. But such ways of reading are less common in the academic world today than they were twenty or thirty years ago. As a result, many analysts in institutes probably have greater difficulty entering dialogue with academics whose work incorporates psychoanalytic ideas.

Here's another course, this one with a great deal of psychoanalytic content; it is offered by the department of medical history and bioethics at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where it is taught by two professors of medical history. Its title is "Psychoanalysis and Colonialism":

For most of the twentieth century, psychoanalysis was a tool both of empire and of anti-imperialism. Insights from psychoanalysis shaped European ideas about the colonial world, the character and potential of native cultures, and the anxieties and alienation of displaced white colonizers and sojourners. Moreover, this intense and intimate engagement with empire came to shape the global psychoanalytic subjectivities that emerged in the twentieth century—whether European or non-European. Our understandings of culture, citizenship, and self have a history that is both colonial (and thus "global") and psychoanalytic—yet the history of this intersection has been scarcely explored, and never examined in comparative perspective. As part of a new research circle sponsored by the University of Wisconsin's International Institute on 'Globalizing the Unconscious: Cross-Cultural Encounters with Colonial Psychoanalysis,' the seminar will explore the uses of psychoanalysis for the framing of colonial citizenship and the impact of empire in the making of the modern psychoanalytic subject.

This course seems to us notable and distinctive in a number of ways. Above all, it juxtaposes two conceptual fields, psychoanalysis and colonialism, that many clinical psychoanalysts may never before have considered as terms existing in any relation to each other. This intensely scholarly course, whose online syllabus allowed a more-detailed-than-usual view of it, features a mix of writers familiar to clinical psychoanalysts (Freud, Ernest Jones, Dorothy Holmes, George Devereux, Abram Kardiner, Marie Bonaparte, Géza Róheim), one of great importance with whom many are not familiar (Franz Fanon), and a host of writers most are unlikely to have read (Jacques Derrida, Edward Said, Lucien Levy-Bruehl, Michael Taussig, Albert Memmi, Anne McClintock, and others). The broadest

social issues, on the one hand, and entirely intrapsychic matters, on the other, are juxtaposed in this course in a way that can be daunting. Here again language is a big part of the challenge: how many clinical psychoanalysts are equipped to even guess the meaning of the phrase “global psychoanalytic subjectivities”?

As a final example, a course examining contemporary art and the effects of new media forms on identity and the body is offered in Cornell University’s art history department. Its title is “Digital Bodies, Virtual Identities”:

This seminar will read theory, contemporary art, and video to question the status of “the body” as it is scanned, morphed, pixilated, pinged, and otherwise encoded in the digital sphere. Do recent procedures of digitized virtualization of the body contribute to or alter notions of identity developed in philosophy, psychoanalysis, and identity politics? How does the cross-globalization of the tracked and scanned body contribute to our understanding of corporeal specificity and ethnic, national, or economic particularity? Do feminist and queer appropriations of new technology alter assumptions about sexuality and gender in the digital age? And do increasingly interactive artistic and theoretical practices in the East and the West contribute to a reformulation of the specificity of national and/or Western paradigms of the body? The seminar provides a brief introductory overview of philosophical and psychoanalytical discussions of the “virtual” body before mapping the impact on traditional theorizations of more recent corporeal mutations in the cyber sphere.

This course presents multiple theoretical points of view (feminist, psychoanalytic, philosophical) that are being used to question the complex effects that the new media (virtual technologies) have on the representation of the human body. It is difficult to get a sense of how ideas from psychoanalysis are put to use in this course. Queer theory (a form of theory owing much to the postmodern turn in the humanities, and one with increasing influence there as new notions of the arbitrariness of gender definitions and gender identity gain in power in the academy) is relatively unfamiliar to psychoanalysts. The concepts of the “cross-globalization of the tracked and scanned body” and “psychoanalytical discussions of the ‘virtual’ body” are likely to be quite novel for clinically based analysts.

Courses like these last two would almost certainly be the most difficult of our examples for clinical psychoanalysts to productively engage, but all except the mythology course at Bates would require the significant acquisition of new vocabulary and concepts presented as psychoanalytic,

a number of which might occasion misgivings in some analysts, or at least complaints about their unfamiliarity.<sup>4</sup>

This snapshot of courses within liberal arts curricula suggests the challenges for bridge building between organized psychoanalysis and the broader intellectual world of bright undergraduates. In particular, organized psychoanalysis is challenged when the familiar terminology of psychoanalytic theory is translated into the new languages encountered in the postmodernist-influenced liberal arts, where most of the courses with psychoanalytic content are being taught. American clinical psychoanalysts motivated to forge new links with undergraduates have a broad potential audience of students, perhaps many more from departments outside psychology than from within it. These students are gaining familiarity with Freud's work, with psychoanalytic concepts, and with the psychoanalytic worldview, and these analysts might wish to reach out to them. However, it may be difficult to build bridges between psychoanalytic theorizing driven by clinical practice, on the one hand, and, on the other, theorizing that reworks psychoanalytic theory, often without reference to psychoanalytic clinical practice or to psychoanalytic thinkers and developments after Freud (save, perhaps, Lacan<sup>5</sup>).

Lacan's influence, as documented in our survey, is a prominent factor in the uses to which psychoanalytic ideas are put in today's academy. Although the controversial status of his ideas (and practice) within the American tradition of clinical psychoanalysis may deter some analysts from a serious study of his work, a greater familiarity with the language

<sup>4</sup>We also searched eight course descriptions randomly chosen from the psychology department courses identified by our search as including psychoanalytic concepts, and found that all of them offered psychoanalytic theory as one of at least three (often four or five) comparative perspectives on the subject matter of the course. It was not possible to glean a more specific sense of how psychoanalytic ideas are used in these courses, because of their dryly written descriptions, which tend to be less evocative and much more abstract than those in other academic areas where psychoanalytic ideas make their appearance. None of the eight psychology courses we randomly located was a course taking psychoanalysis, by itself, as its central subject matter; each was a course comparing various perspectives on a given area (e.g., development, psychopathology).

<sup>5</sup>It is of course important, though beyond the scope of a full discussion here, that Lacan's was always a work that claimed to be a "return to Freud," which has perhaps let innovators in the humanities and social sciences off the hook regarding any felt need to encounter psychoanalytic thinkers beyond Freud and Lacan. Additionally, Lacan's dismissive critique of ego psychology—and, more broadly, disdain for things American—may operate as a "nail in the coffin" of any interest these academics might have had in non-Lacanian post-Freudian psychoanalytic developments.

and concepts of Lacanian theory, as well as with postmodernism and critical theory, would help clinical psychoanalysts better appreciate the applications of psychoanalytic ideas now current in U.S. colleges and universities. If these analysts do not become better acquainted with *how* psychoanalytic theory has been taken up by such authors as Žižek, Lacan, Derrida, Foucault, Deleuze, Bersani, and Butler, they will be unable to fully appreciate the vitality of these new applications and reworkings of psychoanalytic concepts.

But if clinical psychoanalysis is the poorer for this lack of interdisciplinary dialogue, so too does the academic world suffer a loss. In U.S. colleges and universities there seems to us to be little understanding of how psychoanalysis has evolved out of, and in many ways away from, Freud's original insights. In the humanities in particular, based on a range of experiences we have had in recent years, it is our impression that in the academy psychoanalytic concepts are typically encountered in a reading of Freud's works and perhaps of Lacan's; the contributions of other post-Freudian authors, so vital to clinical psychoanalytic practice and theory-building, are often simply ignored. Given the growing divide in the languages spoken by clinicians and academics, with Freud their only common referent, clinical psychoanalysis and analysis as represented in the academy are at risk of becoming ships that pass in the night.

Two interesting convergences in the presentation of analysis in psychology department courses, on the one hand, and courses in other academic areas, on the other, seem to be emerging. In both venues, psychoanalysis is often identified exclusively with Freud's work (see Park and Auchincloss's findings about psychology textbooks), rather than as an ongoing *movement* and a living, evolving process. In each, its current existence as a mode of therapeutic practice is disregarded (as in the idea that "psychoanalysis is, in the end, a form of reading," from the Williams College course we noted). In both venues, students may well be left with the impression that clinical psychoanalysis *did* exist (maybe while Freud existed and for a time thereafter), but does no more.

An important finding of the survey is the relatively lower number of courses offered by public universities that have identifiable psychoanalytic content. Although, as we have noted, access to data from public universities was limited by the absence of several course catalogues and by the prevalence of course descriptions briefer than those of private universities and colleges, we find it troubling that only 18 percent of the courses that could be identified across all academic institutions were taught at the



best institutions of our public university systems, despite their enrolling a much larger number of undergraduates than do the private colleges and universities in our sample. Outreach programs like those being considered by TFUE, which would target the brightest young minds in the country, should attend to the differences between public and private institutions; disseminating psychoanalytic ideas is likely to be more challenging in public universities than in private schools. Geographical issues ought also to be noted—it appears to be much easier for a bright undergraduate to find courses featuring psychoanalytic ideas in the Northeast than in the Midwest, for example (the history of “dustbowl empiricism” no doubt plays a role here). Special outreach efforts aimed at public universities and geographic areas outside the Northeast may warrant consideration.

### CONCLUSION

It will be useful to continue tracking the view of psychoanalysis presented in psychology textbooks, and to continue gathering data on how psychoanalytic concepts, practice, and research are represented in psychology departments. The data of our survey suggest that it is also important to better understand how psychoanalytic ideas are represented outside of psychology departments, where many more courses are offered that make use of them. The survey provides baselines for future comparisons regarding the number of courses that feature psychoanalytic ideas, across all areas of study in these schools, which can allow the assessment of emerging trends over time.

Psychoanalytic ideas are dispersed today across a host of disciplines, and have so evolved in these disciplines that clinically oriented analysts may not readily recognize them. We believe there is great untapped potential in this psychoanalytic diaspora into the liberal arts beyond psychology departments. Many of the courses in these outlying areas engage with gender questions, sexuality issues, and cultural practices, a world of referents shared with the consulting room. Despite the difficulties posed by conceptual and terminological differences, there is potential here for fruitful encounters between clinical psychoanalysis and the academy.

As we have learned from our survey, the opportunities for students to engage actively with psychoanalytic ideas are relatively rare in psychology departments. Assertive undergraduates expressing an interest in learning more about psychoanalysis to the faculties of their psychology departments would likely find the resources of these departments inadequate to

assist them beyond very basic levels. This is regrettable. Although a limited number of academic psychologists with convictions about the value of psychoanalytic theory will undoubtedly continue to engage it in their teaching, it seems reasonable to assume that for the foreseeable future most psychology departments will continue—barring the development of student demands for more teaching about psychoanalysis—to under-represent psychoanalytic ideas in their course offerings.

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*Jonathan Redmond*  
13101 Allen Road, Suite 100  
Southgate, MI 48195  
E-mail: jon\_redo@yahoo.com

*Michael Shulman*  
117 North First Street, Suite 113  
Ann Arbor, MI 48104  
E-mail: mshulmanphd@gmail.com