PLATO'S GHOST
Minus Links and Liminality in Psychoanalytic Practice

Nilofer Kaul

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To

Raj and Damyanti who started me off

It was Prometheus the father of a new race that formed Truth, so justice may be dispensed among mankind. While he was still forming it, he was summarily called away by Jove. Thereupon he left his workshop in the charge of the treacherous Cunning, his new apprentice. It was this same Cunning who formed such a clever likeness of Truth that none could have told them apart. He then found he had no clay left to make the feet. His master returned and was struck by the brilliant imitation. Wanting credit for both, he baked them in his great furnace and breathed life into them. Sacred Truth walked with modest gait, while its imitation remained rooted on the spot. This spurious copy got named Mendacity because it had no feet—a charge to which I must agree.

—Phaedrus. Prometheus and Cunning. Fable IV

In: H. T. Riley (Ed.), *The Comedies of Terence: And the Fables of Phædrus*. Adapted from a translation by H. T. Riley & C. Smart. London: G. Bell & Sons, 1887.

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Acknowledgements

This is the page that I most wanted to write even before I began to imagine this book.

It was a book dreamt of by Dr Salman Akhtar. I had not imagined I had a book in me. But I was moved by his faith and I knew I could not fail him. To his faith, I owe this enterprise. Thank you for giving me such an unlooked-for gift. For your unwavering faith and unasked-for generosity.

I then began to frantically hunt in my essays for a "figure in the carpet" (Geertz, 1973). Like Banquo's ghost at the banquet, it turned out that what had hovered around me was the inherently liminal nature of psychoanalysis. I am filled with the need to justify a project that might after all be yet another set of essays of an uneven quality, lumped together under a rubric. And yet, here I am trying to see what this particular label might have to offer. It is hard, given that every time I have thought of something, I realise that it is a pale echo of one's teachers and psychoanalytic parents—Freud, Klein, Bion, Meltzer, Winnicott, Tustin—of the ones so ahead of their time and who left behind such a trove that it would require me many lifetimes to explore. They are followed by the teachers who continue to expand the work of these: in no particular

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Permissions

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Likewise the *British Journal of Psychotherapy* for allowing me to publish an article in 2018, "Rehearsed Language of Psychoanalysis: Camouflage, Masquerade, ventriloquism". Ann was extremely patient with my redrafts. The paper is republished as Chapter 1 and leads into the book.

I have also been given permission by Karnac to republish "On Regret and Plato's Ghost" which is Chapter 3. Routledge has given permission to republish "Literary Portrayals of Arrogance". It appears here as Chapter 4.

I have Faber's permission to use T. S. Eliot for my concluding paragraph.

All the papers that have been republished have also been revised, keeping the theme of negative links in mind.

About the author

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Prologue

Liminal spaces

Psychoanalysis may well have sprung up from unoccupied spaces in the mind that remain inaccessible to thinking. And yet, human imagination has often endeavoured to give shape to such areas of blindness that may have been suppressed, dreaded, denied, or dimly recognised. Such indeterminate spaces may be undecided, unknowable, ineffable, and often create an experience of impotency. Such affective states press for their own language and what erupts is a language for the unconscious. This may often intersect with what has come to be recognised as the language of psychoanalysis.

We may see a kind of prehistory of the relationship with the intermediate in mythology, literature, and religion—that feeds the language of psychoanalysis. To use Bion's (1962) idea, such harbingers of liminality could be read as what preceded Freud—the "preconceptions" he inherited, that "mated" with his mind and led to the "conception" of

psychoanalysis (p. 91). Psychoanalysis is created through what I would like to term the "uncannisation" of the stable contours of life. As we both court and evade these states in our sessions, we forge links that are truthful as well as those that are untruthful.

Uncannising language

Freud's idea of the "contact barrier" (1950a) as the permeable divide between the conscious and the unconscious provides a good visual for the shaky contact the psyche has with "reality". Writing in 1895, Freud imagines this barrier as a moveable line that enables repression. This latter being essential to deal with the overwhelming data the world inundates us with, some editing must happen unconsciously. This permeable divide then enables the formation of the "unconscious". The mind requires to consign some of the overwhelming data into the vast unconscious. Thus "… an uncanny effect often arises when the boundary between fantasy and reality is blurred, when we are faced with the reality of something that we have until now considered imaginary …" (Freud, 1919h, p. 150). Freud thinks of the destabilising experience of the uncanny ("familiar" rendered "unfamiliar") as an affective experience where that which has been banished by the mind revisits it; albeit in a way that the divide instilled between known and unknown is jolted.

Furthermore, the whole experience of reading "The Uncanny" embodies the aesthetic tension that recurs through this book—the inadequacy of language to capture emotional experience and the compulsion to use it. Or the sense of awe at the unknowability of the universe and the creation of messiahs and "strange gods" that give an assurance of access. This unusual paper locates a body of sensations that signal an inchoate experience which destabilises the quotidian texture of our lives. The affect Freud locates exceeds the interpretations, creating an estrangement from the quotidian but in doing so he gives words to an experience that is immense and exceeds verbal language. This tension is at the heart of Freud's paper as well as this book.

More importantly, he is creating a vocabulary for the unconscious and this paper is significant in the relationship Freud creates between language and meaning. The free associative style where meanings emerge fleetingly and are then replaced is a template for writing psychoanalytically.

Old, familiar words are revitalised with new meanings and associations. This thus embodies the process of meaning-making that is the work of psychoanalysis. It would be fair to say then that the language of psychoanalysis, whether it is about time, memory, or dreams, attempts to "un-consciousise" (Bion, 1992, p. 353; Civitarese, 2011, p. 277) language. Bion (1962) draws our attention to the idea that the unconscious is not an already existing entity, but psychic work enables it. Overwhelmed as we are by stimulating elements, the mind relies for its survival on the process of unconsciousising. To extend this, the "uncanny" may also be seen as the reservoir of the language of psychoanalysis. Some of the building blocks of this are considered.

Spectral time

The timelessness of the unconscious Freud demonstrated variously in his work on dreams that disregard chronology, in transference where both time and space are suspended. In fact *Nachträglichkeit*, transference, and repetition compulsion are just a few of the very many ways in which Freud creates a vocabulary for psychic time. The psychic experience of time can be either an evasion of the now, or a suspension of transience. But emotionally we understand the psychic significance of *nunc stans* (or abiding time).

Time itself becomes elusive as the patient is full of memory (melancholy, regret) and desire (future, anxiety) but is situated in the present. It seems however that we would rather dwell in what Bion (1965) calls the "ghosts of the past" or the "ghosts of the future" (p. 95)—than to inhabit the present, the here and the now.

Memories which are presumed to be the keepers of time, the way Freud writes about them repeatedly, are both chronicles and alibis; both revealing and concealing; meaningful and unknowable. Straddling the past, present, and future, they are timeless and historical, weaving inextricably terrors and desires. Through his writings, Freud examines the whimsical nature of truth in remembering, thereby creating an emotional logic that is peculiarly psychoanalytic. For instance, the hysteric that he encounters is an uncanny figure who seems to suffer from uncontrollable memories (Freud, 1916–17, p. 43). We may argue that hysterics suffer from undigested, unprocessed thoughts. Is it that they strain the

bearer who cannot digest them? Is it about a refusal to mourn? The hysteric evades pain by slipping away from it into a kind of melancholic past. But what is radical is that apparently somatic symptoms are caused by "whimsical remembering" and not the events themselves. This is radical subjectivity and emotions are at the heart of this.

"The Mystic Writing-Pad" (Freud, 1925a) suggests another model of the mind to him that is certainly not a blank slate. In fact emotional events leave behind traces. Akin to what he says about transference, he suggests that while the original memory is lost, it will get revivified in a way to resonate with the moment. Extending spectrality, Freud (1926e) suggests that in the transference the analyst is like a witch doctor who exorcises the ghosts in the room or "evil spirits" (Civitarese, 2011). Loewald (1960) extends Freud's idea, where he says that the unconscious is a "crowd of ghosts" and these ancestors haunt the present generation with their afterlife. Here is the passage that is memorable not just for its prose but also for the poetics of transference and which I quote because it is always a pleasure to reread:

> Transference is pathological in so far as the unconscious is a crowd of ghosts, and this is the beginning of the transference neurosis in analysis: ghosts of the unconscious, imprisoned by defences but haunting the patient in the dark of his defences and symptoms, are allowed to taste blood, are let loose. In the daylight of analysis the ghosts of the unconscious are laid and led to rest as ancestors whose power is taken over and transformed into the newer intensity of present life, of the secondary process and contemporary objects. (p. 29)

While Freud introduces this spectral dimension to transference, we see Loewald in the passage above elaborating the uncanny aspect of the field: blood, old ghosts, shadow-life, crowd of ghosts, haunting, imprisoned, let loose, and taste blood. This is the vocabulary that seems befitting to Freud's conception of psychoanalysis, which in the daytime world of goals and treatments we tend to forget all too often.

Working with the Wolf Man's (1918b) "memories", Freud realises a counter-movement. "Memories" are being created, he suggests (radically inverting his earlier work), in the present to resonate with the

experience of the here and now. Memories—which refer us to the past or even the future, are in fact the "remembered present" (Edelman, 1989) and almost indistinguishable from dreams. When we are able to function analytically, we can listen to them oneirically. Needless to say, we may find ourselves listening concretely (as to facts), or with envy or contempt, and so on—which brings us to the idea of minus links.

Dreams

The belief and construction of emotional logic is evident when Freud places dreams at the heart of psychoanalysis. In doing so, he de-centres the daytime, rational universe by placing the apparently nonsensical topsy-turvy sleep fragments as Hansel's breadcrumbs that would lead the way to the unconscious. He reads dreams like unconscious poems that might give us clues to our underworld. Some of the time they can be like puzzles that can be put together through associations. These free associations are somewhat like a medium conducting a seance—they bring messages from the unknown world and we make what sense we can of them.

In this sense, free associations arise from a liminal space between sleep and waking, between conscious and unconscious. The building blocks are the repressed past, the recent past, and their relationship with the wishes of the present. The unconscious dissolves some obligations to the cold world of facts (temporality and spatiality) to be able to marry its memory to desires. There is a tense haiku here. As he de-centres rationality of the mind, he creates a rationale for the irrational mind. But in this somewhat supple crossfire, there emerges the idea of the "unknown navel" (1899a) of the dream. This unknowable knot defies penetration and remains perhaps the best signifier of the psychoanalytic project.

If dream analysis in a classical sense lays emphasis on associative patterns, Bionian metapsychology breaks down the distinction between dreaming and waking states. We can be "awake" but dreaming, as also "sleeping" but without having the sleep apparatus at work. Bion introduces reverie as fundamental to the capacity for thinking, when he imagines a bipersonal field with mother and baby. The mother who can think about the baby's experiences for him displays a capacity for reverie (1962). She can drift into her baby's mind and step out of it. She is labile

and amphibian—she can swim in baby's mind and she can walk on the ground outside it. This is a capacity of the mind that the baby may be able to introject. This "reverie" is like a waking dream. The mind is aware that it is dreaming and is able to come out of it. On the other hand, Bion (1957) writes of psychotic patients who speak of the concrete world in a way that sounds like the "furniture of dreams" (p. 268). The contact barrier has collapsed and what should have been a dream is experienced as nightmarish reality.

The analyst is accordingly required to be in suspense (literally, to hover, to doubt) and treat the patient's presence like a dream. This induced state of "hallucinosis" can be facilitated by the analyst's eschewing of memory and desire. The past and the future are coordinates that anchor us too firmly and inhibit dreaming. So we see how dream/waking in Bion's writing becomes dream⇋waking. I am using here the reversible arrows to indicate the bidirectionality implicit in Bion's thinking. Dreaming and waking states often punctuate one another and do not require sleep to cleave them apart. In the caesural space between them lie reveries, delusions, hallucinations, and hallucinosis. The analyst needs to mobilise his psychotic part to receive the patient's state of mind, and also when she needs to become the patient's double (Botella & Botella, 2005) and become his experience.

Psychoanalysis defamiliarises familiar words like time, memories, sleep, and dreams to create a psychic lexicon for what is an uncanny experience. Into this slippery and indefinable space between analyst and analysand, all movement and exchange can either be towards emotional truth or away from it. The path to the truth of the analytic link is paved with dangers. However, the links between the analyst and herself, or between her and the analysand may not always be truthful. Pain, shame, fear, incomprehensibility may all obtrude on the link and take it towards untruth.

Introduction

Plunged into terrifying and primitive states of unknowability in a Covid-struck universe, it seems all the more pressing for psychoanalysis to insist on its commitment to what Keats (1818) famously referred to as "negative capability"—a capacity for enduring the incertitude of life, the singular absence of foreknowledge. This book is dedicated to a reiteration of unknowability, paradox, gaps, synapses, and aporias as well as the minus links that may spring in the space of the in-between. I have used the idea of liminality to broad-brush these openings that spring between monoliths—large faults as well as small crevices, caesuras, and colons. Bion uses the idea of synapses or the space between nerve endings to delineate a synaptic model (1962) of the mind. In the same way as the openings between the nerve endings transmit messages that reach the brain, it is the dynamic field of the analytic link that shapes the course of the analysis.

This may have a certain resonance in the times we live in where denial, disavowal, lies, and propaganda invade us virtually and we have to set up apps to filter the news for us.

Liminality

The concept of the "liminal" was developed by the eminent anthropologist Victor Turner (1969), who borrowed and modified Arnold van Gennep's (1960) *The Rites of Passage*. While the latter used the term to refer to a specific set of rites of passage required for boys to transition into becoming men, Turner and the post-structuralist turn gave what was the idea of a middle, a certain indeterminacy, and an infinite sense of suspension. He identified rituals, carnivals, plays as liminal spaces where the time and space dimensions of our lives—the grid that upholds the quotidian rhythm of our life—collapses its dominant grip. It is not just middle, but "betwixt and between", it is both and neither. Spatially we can think of it as borders, boundaries, margins, highways. These lines separate, but somewhat like an accordion, fold in and expand, making it a dynamic rather than fixed concept.

This space that opens up between bifurcated entities is the space where transformation is potentially possible. Most fundamentally it is the space between the analyst's unconscious and that of the analysand. It seems that the space that springs up between life and death, dreams and waking, god and man is a dynamic one, much like Freud's "contact barrier". When spaces open up between such bifurcated entities (death/life, sleep/waking, terror/beauty) they are marked by a dynamic, shifting liminal quality. These spaces are akin to what has been expanded by Bion (1977) into what Freud called caesura (1916a). This is both a space break and a continuity.

It may be a dramatic collective trauma like the Covid-19 pandemic or a terrible personal rupture—it is always a space of unpredictable change. This may be symbolised imaginatively with patients when we can dream and/or create a language to communicate with. Or it may only gesture towards the ineffable as we see when we cannot forge a language with patients, or with whom the link feels sterile or dead. Through the unknowable whispers and wordless exchanges, psychoanalysis opens a space for reading. This dynamic space between the text (session) and

reader (analyst) offers itself up for making meaning and thereby transformations. It is in such caesural spaces that transformative thinking may happen, but it is also where minus links can be forged.

Caesura

When Freud (1916a) famously writes of how the continuity between life inside and outside the womb is greater than the impressive "caesura" of birth suggests, his emphasis is, as we know, on the continuity through the separation. The baby is forever severed from the womb, but he retains a lifelong link with mother. Freud uses the term "caesura"—a term used in prosody which indicates a pause between two phrases. It is usually indicated by a comma, a period, or an ellipsis. It is not the end of a sentence, but it is the middle which allows a breath, a rest, a halting space. The relationship to this space is linked with the way we make meaning of the world and our objects.

Bion expands Freud's use here by imagining it as a model for thinking and for emotional growth:

> The caesura of birth is the model of the birth of every new thought. Just as the caesura of birth makes one insensitive to the persistence of more primitive forms of knowledge and levels of the mind, so every new idea establishes a new caesura, a barrier, an obstacle to other ideas, which are thrust back into a cone of shadow, if not positively killed: A foetal idea can kill itself or be killed, and that is not a metaphor only. (Bion, 1977, p. 417)

Bion's use of the term indicates an indefinable gap between two momentous movements. This is a space charged with potency and the possibility of change. It is itself unsettled and therefore unsettling. The analytic mind can drown at this meeting place, and it can also collaborate in a perverse link. For instance, Meg Harris Williams (2005) in *The Vale of Soul Making* writes of how the value of pain is not just to endure it but to make meaning of suffering. This clarifies the distinction between the analyst's masochistic submission to the analysand, and a more tumultuous experience through which a depressive position may be arrived at.

Minus links

Michaelangelo's "Birth of Adam" moves us because the hand reaching out is left yearningly unmet. God in that immortal gesture puts out his hand but their hands are unable to touch. This gives a visual representation of the enigmatic void—perhaps places in our mind that never became thoughts, for it awaits another to touch that part of our mind. The need to give order and form to this "void" comes from an experience that is of being lost or being without a mind that is adequate. When the mind is able to "suffer" loneliness and tolerate the void, it may experience what has been called the "sublime" or the oceanic feeling. However, this vision may be neither borne, nor succumbed to, but perverted. A third possibility opens when the mind is confronted with unbearable anguish. This third possibility may include false prophets and cult leaders who forge a minus link with the group.

The figure of the messiah in different religions (Dante's Virgil included) seems to promise an accessibility to the dread of this "formless void". The messiah figure in many religions stands between god and man, a promise of a medium, one who knows the overlord; a passage to the inaccessible. The messiah promises to fill in this gap, to traverse the threateningly indeterminate space. Christ straddles both mortal and immortal worlds by being both Son of Man and Son of God. The epiphanic truth is borne by the messiah for the group.

A profane version of this would be the séance and the medium—not to mention the psychoanalyst in the throes of transference. Such a figure promises access to truth and knowledge, but mainly promises to straddle the turbulent middle space. When writing about the mystic's relationship to the group, Bion (1970) suggests that the messiah seems to be born from the group's inability to bear this gap. This is analogous for him with how the thinker is born from a pressure of thoughts. This reverses the dominant philosophical tradition which posits the Cartesian cogito, and a mind that is the font of thoughts. In Bion's vocabulary, thoughts are largely unprocessed bits of data the mind is overwhelmed by. These bits of information are about the world outside as well as the one inside. To deal with this constant pressure, these thoughts demand a thinker and these are the conditions that are conducive for the mind/thinker to be born; but this latter is by no means inevitable. Analogously groups

(especially the ones that cohere on the dependency model) await and even create their messiahs. There is often the negative possibility and a frequent outcome is the perversion of this role. False prophets and demagogues, fascists and fanatics use their capacity to take in group projections (charisma) and offer a group identity that is based on hate, propaganda, and lies, rather than truth. Demagogues who promise a golden age but through ethnic and religious cleansing, proffer hatred as knowledge, and violence as martyrdom.

Perversion offers a way of evading the breakdown without renouncing the power. Psychosis, prophesy, and perversion then become three possibilities. In such perverse relationships with truth, delusion replaces knowledge. We now look at how terror can find a pseudo-container in horror, mourning can be endlessly deferred as melancholia, equivocation can imitate the syntax of paradox, and autistic spaces can imitate transitional spaces as they replace spontaneous and creative relationships with repetitive "fantasying" (Winnicott, 1971, pp. 35–50). In this section I juxtapose links with their minus versions. This is a prelude to the exercise involved in analytic work. Do we have a truthful link with the analysand? Are we colluding with his melancholic narcissism to evade the painful work of mourning? Are we making interpretations that dilute the terror or are we really giving shape to it? Are we equivocating with the analysand or are we enabling a paradoxical state of mind? And finally, given how we have all had to work virtually during Covid-19, was the virtual space being used as a transitional space or an autistic one?

The nervous system communicates messages through the spaces that lie between nerve endings, or the synapses. Likewise the analytic field resembles the space of a synapse where two minds link. Bion seems to suggest an almost exclusive focus on the link between the analyst and analysand. It is only through the expansion of these spaces that the mind's capacity to experience, to think, and to give meaning can be expanded. This "caesural" space (between the analyst and analysand) is congruent with the "synaptic model of psychoanalysis" (Bergstein, 2013; Bion, 1962). The emotionally transformative encounter between two minds requires a "transcending of the caesura" (Bergstein, 2013; Bion, 1976). The submerging into the caesura, the failure to link may be an attack or a deficit (Alvarez, 1998). All too often the analyst may experience the patient's drive to communicate as an attack on linking (Bergstein, 2015).

Thus the link between the two minds can also become the space for destruction, perversion, evacuation, regression, and stasis. The area that lies between the mind of the analyst and that of the analysand is thus the liminal area of psychoanalysis—of growth, change, turbulence as well as that of impasse, bastion, and failure. This latter is perhaps what Bion (1962) meant about minus links.

Bion (1962) identifies the three emotional links possible between the analyst and analysand as being L, H, and K, that is, love, hate, and knowledge.

While it is K that is desirable as a link between the analyst and analysand, Bion recognises that there can also be the negative version of each of these possibilities. Using algebraic grammar, he then expands the idea of "minus links" between analyst and analysand. Meltzer and Williams (1988) elaborate:

> Many objects and events arouse one or the other; we love this, hate that, wish to understand the other. Our passions are not engaged. Our interest is in abeyance; we wish to engage with the object of love, to avoid or destroy the object of hate, to master the object that challenges our understanding. (pp. 143–144)

In my experience, minus links include not just anti-linkages, but often the mimicked, the travesties, the obverse of true emotional links. For instance, it is often a patina of empathy/concern that works as a smoke-screen and conceals the ongoing emotional truth of the link. And a masochistic surrender often acts as an alibi for containment. This breeds a popular misconception in the cultural unconscious of the analyst as some kind of martyred mother—"murtyr"—and may become a source of great and secret narcissistic resource for the analyst. Bion suggests that the "-K link in analysis tells the story of an internal object relationship saturated with envy and hate between mother and infant" (Bergstein 2019, p. 101). There can be a "perverse" link that is based on an untruth -K (Bion, 1962, pp. 66–71) that can prevail in the analytic relationship. There is an incipient experience of curiosity, arrogance, and stupidity—simultaneously or by turns. This link is related to the negative of knowledge. The capacity to give meaning is all too often in peril.

André Green's idea of the negative in *The Work of the Negative* (1999) gives a conceptual history of psychoanalysis through the idea of the negative. He uses the negative as Ariadne's thread that runs through psychoanalytic concepts. The study of the unconscious can be seen as the history of the negative, the absent, the blank, and the unrepresented. Green writes about the analysand's blank mourning and negative hallucinations, blank psychosis, and psychically dead mothers. He concurs with Bion's -K as manifest in moments when the patient refuses elaboration of meaning (p. 9).

This has a certain resemblance to Bion's ideas. But while Green is more concerned with giving shape to objectless states of mind, Bion is more interested in the emotional links between minds (as well as the link between us and our own emotions). It is not just the analyst or analysand that Bion dwells on, but the links between the two. His formulation of reveries, for instance, is a good example of the link in that the Bionian reverie inhabits this "caesarean"—the cutting off of the umbilical cord, with a mother continuing to dream for him, till he can dream for himself.

What Bion means by -L and -H is hard to grasp. Maiello (2000) suggests that,

> Hatred (H) is viewed by Bion as the other face of love (L). … that behaviour that is inspired by the mental state of H corresponds to aggression as described by Riviere, whereas destructive violence would be the equivalent of Bion's -H, i.e. a form of hate that has lost its object and has become incomprehensible and incommunicable. Its inaccessibility to K could be due to the effect of the attacks on linking in the mental apparatus of the perpetrator of violence. (p. 8)

Maiello feels that intense violence and hatred where the object is lost could well be what Bion meant by -H and -L. For Maiello, it is the intensity that distinguishes H from -H.

Extending Maiello, to me it appears that (if L and H are two sides of the same powerful emotional link, then they are located on the same side of his grid) the negative side of the grid may be read as a state of mind

where all categories have been inverted and travestied. Here emotions have been hollowed out and the links retain the form of emotions but are emptied of substance. This may be captured in what Bion (1965) calls "ghosts of departed quantities" (p. 157)—or absences such as "no-breast" (1970, p. 16) that define powerful psychic entities. Absence, he argues, has a very potent psychic presence. The breast (or the mind) that can not be available to the terrified infant becomes in Yeats' term, a "terrible beauty" (1921).

As Bion tends to bring the focus on the analytic functioning, we can perhaps see how to recognise minus links in the analytic field. For instance when the analyst experiences the absence of love or the absence of hate. Such an absence of vitality may be hidden behind a mechanical "sense of duty". This may conceal indifference or boredom or a rustled up empathy. The negative of love and hate it seems to me could well be the deadened responses by the analyst—dutiful concern and empathy appear to be frequently reported responses in supervision. Boredom may overwhelm the link, blurring the edges of righteousness and contempt the analyst fails to recognise in herself. I am suggesting that the links of L, H, and K can be psychically strenuous, and that unconsciously the impostor versions of these may replace them. Dutiful responses such as concern and protectiveness often form a patina that is the negative of L and H. An absence of curiosity at one end and prurience at the other end can form -K.

Does this patina indicate a perversion of the truth because the analyst has mastered the evasion of emotions, or is it an inevitable wall that we are all unable to scale in ourselves? Perhaps it is hard to tell the difference, but this absence of vital links, or the "second skin" that forms a layer on the link, makes the spontaneous emotion inaccessible and is closer to what I imagine as a minus link. Our hatred and dread of analysis surfaces in the way we unconsciously evade the intolerable atmosphere of being with patients: our aversion to pain, our inability to bear envy, the attack on our narcissism, the impotency from our inability to help them, the mind's unavailability for what appears so foreign—a kind of psychic xenophobia. It is this "unbearability" that enables the forging of minus links which are in danger of becoming a kind of "minus psychoanalysis".

Based on this template, this book attempts to expand liminal spaces between the language of the unconscious and that of psychoanalysis

(Chapter 1). This demands attentiveness to the gap between vocabulary and syntax (Chapter 2). Where for instance, false sentimentality replaces emotionality (Chapter 3). This is a crucial instance of the distinction between L, H, and -L, -H. Other chapters look at the presumed binaries between mind and body and pride and arrogance. Eventually the discussion around parasitism takes us to a creation of autistic islands which may well be when the analysis either ends or fails (impasses, bastions).

For me, the titles of the chapters echo the Eliotesque shadow that falls in "The Hollow Men" (1925) between "idea and reality", "motion and act", "conception and creation", and so on. Somewhat later to my surprise (and dismay) I discovered how creatively Tustin (1986) has used Eliot's poem while describing autistic mechanisms. Writing about the unpleasant experience of the infant when he confronts disappointing reality, Tustin gives to the Freudian shadow an added meaning: the constant sulk of disappointment that lurks all too often in us. In deference to this poignant expression of the rather eternal caesura between "the idea and the reality", I quote this to enlarge the area of shadows:

> This unpleasant experience has aroused a profound sulk, which Eliot calls the "shadow". This sulk of disappointment—this umbrage—which comes between "the idea and the reality" is the result of the discrepancy between what was expected and what actually occurred … (p. 163)

When Bion (1962) first writes of minus links, he relates this to an absence of containment and to unbearable psychic pain that must be evaded. The psychotic part of the personality functions to protect the mind by a flight from truth. But when the Botellas (2005) write about the "work of figurability", it is not so much about evasion as it is about the inaccessibility and the irrepresentability of the unconscious. There appears to be an implicit causality in writing of minus links as strategies of evasion. It is of course not possible to know when it is "evasion" and when it is "beyond the spectrum" (Bergstein, 2014), but it is worth keeping these two paradigms in mind. It is also worth keeping in mind Bergstein's (2019) observation that minus links may not merely be "attacks on linking", but may be coming from a "drive to communicate" (p. 101). He suggests that these are perceived by us as attacks, but, from

another vertex, these are also communications—maybe ones that we are unable to translate. Either way, this is difficult to distinguish and lies in a liminal space. But it is a salutary reminder against analytic complacency of knowing the truth.

It seems to me that at all times there is a force that acts against the recognition of truth and which eludes us much of the time. How can we expand our thinking of negative links between the analyst and the analysand—negative links encompassing both "perverse" obfuscations (lies and propaganda) as well as what the novelist Coetzee (1992) calls the "unimaginable", when he writes, "… the task becomes imagining this unimaginable, imagining a form of address that permits the play of writing to start taking place" (pp. 67–68).

Elaborating on Bion's idea of the caesura as his discourse on method, Civitarese (2008) writes:

> However, to what caesuras is Bion referring? One need only read the text, which enumerates a whole series of them: between foetal and postnatal life; between body and psyche (Bion [*A Memoir of the Future*], p. 449); … and hence between direct and indirect evidence; between past and present …; between the language of the analyst and that of the patient; between words worn out by daily use but absolutely suited to the formulation of an interpretation, on the one hand, and specialist jargon, on the other; … between mature and primitive levels of the mind … (p. 1131)

While Civitarese opens up the term caesura here, my own use of the caesural space is more specifically aimed at the subversion of the truthful link. Before we look at the chapters, I want to give examples of concepts plotted on the positive and negative grid. These spaces are marked by the opening of different possibilities: the move towards knowledge and growth, the retention of stasis, or the devolvement into chaos and hell. Often this is a site for where analytic functioning breaks down, while there is apparent harmony. This area where the link is not "truthful", or the analytic couple is unable to discern or tolerate the emotional truth is common to all minus links. It is forms of untruthfulness we slide into that drives my exploration of such liminality.

Mourning or melancholia

"Carrion Comfort" (1885, Hopkins & Smith, 1976), like many of Hopkins' poems, is a violent struggle with the difficulty of keeping faith. This includes not falling to despair. He speaks of despair as being the "carrion" against which he wrestles to keep his faith. At the end, there is a release:

> That night, that year
> Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!) my God.

Hopkins seems to escape despair which represents a perverse temptation. Hopkins' despair scavenges on pain, rather than bears it. This "feast on despair" is a Christian sin that resembles Freudian melancholia. Melancholia, Freud (1917e) seems to suggest, is an evasion of mourning. Here Freud makes a distinction that strikes at the very heart of this. He distinguishes between two ways of responding to object loss—melancholia, where the relationship with the lost object is not relinquished, and mourning, where after a prolonged struggle the relationship with the lost object changes—some thing is relinquished, while other things are introjected. Either loss is experienced so profoundly as a loss of a part of oneself that one never recovers oneself, or else, over time there is a relinquishing through introjection (keeping parts of the object by identifying with the lost object). When the psyche encounters some unexpected pain or threat, it may resort to either "fight or flight" (Bion, 1961).

Mourning is in this sense a fight, while melancholia is a flight from transformative suffering. Dante's purgatory can be read as a melancholic space—in that the souls are perennially waiting for their lost object (Paradise, Promised Land). Perhaps one could stretch this to say that melancholia can be the negative of mourning? The melancholic is in pain, while the mourner is suffering it? Is melancholia always indicative of a narcissistic relation to its lost object? Or could it also include blank mourning states, as André Green refers to them, or other forms of unrepresentable pain?

Here as elsewhere, we see that this space which offers itself for transforming suffering does so only through volcanic eruptions of

unanticipated pain. These spaces can then stagnate or turn sterile. Turbulence itself may become a refuge from transformation. A good example of this is Bollas' (1984) paper on "Loving Hate". The patients described here are addicted to turbulence. In order to evade psychic pain, all links may be perverted. The analytic space, as Bollas illustrates in the paper, can be eroticised and recruited in favour of "psychic equilibrium", as opposed to "psychic change" (Joseph, 1989).

Imagination may be used to create music from suffering, as it can be used to escape from it. Both impulses coexist in poetry as well as in analysis. The work in analysis often entails unpicking mourning from melancholia, masochistic submission from suffering, paradoxical states from equivocatory elisions. I next look at how the language of paradox captures the rhythms of the unconscious in the way that it allows contradictions to coexist. This is often mimicked by equivocation, which is the grammar of perversion.

Paradox or equivocation

It is not new to argue that the psychoanalytic aim is quintessentially paradoxical in that it is both an acknowledgement of the ineffable, and an attempt to give it form—as a way of containing the magnitude of this helplessness. This paradoxical state generates a grammar that is at once an attempt to estrange the quotidian as well as to make acquaintance with the alien and unknown.

In Winnicott's (1971, p. xii) inimitable words:

> My contribution is to ask for a paradox to be accepted and tolerated and respected, and for it not to be resolved. By flight to split-off intellectual functioning it is possible to resolve the paradox, but the price of this is the loss of the value of the paradox itself.

There is an enrichment in the state of the paradox, albeit an enrichment through the renunciation of a fixed meaning. This area of paradox is also the area of playing and it is also the place for psychoanalysis. Here Winnicott is writing about transitional spaces where the playing child is described. For him the game is both real and not. This paves the way for a paradoxical state of mind in which we listen. By "real" he means

as concrete as marbles and as fictional as a story. Transposed into relationships, the object is both under my omnipotent control and separate. Transitional space, or the intermediate area between reality and fantasy—is the concept of an emotional space that is real and imaginary—it is both and neither. Mother's shawl is both mother and not her. Stories move us as though they are real even while we know they are not.

When Freud first dreamt of the psyche as a conflicted zone, he saw the ego as occupying an embattled space—dynamic, moving about, ingratiating, disguising, never still. The ego it seems survives by equivocating with us. Yet persistent equivocation creates a syntax of disavowal. This is best seen in "Fetishism" (1927e) where he mentions two young men who lost their fathers when young. He thinks they have scotomised (literally, scotoma means blind spot) this but then realises his mistake. One current in the mind is still waiting for father, while the other current behaves as his heir. They both believe and do not believe. This realisation of Freud's made him recant on his earlier distinction between neurosis and psychosis (pp. 155–156). I refer to this as the syntax of equivocation.

The paradoxical state of mind is one where two contradictory truths are held together emotionally, without resolution. But in borderline and psychotic states, we can see that the syntax becomes equivocatory. This may resemble paradox, but is in fact a disjunction of the sentence. Paradox requires the renunciation of control (tolerating our inability to control emotional complexity); while equivocation is driven by deceit. In the latter, the mind "pretends" to believe the painful truth, but secretly holds on to the lie.

Equivocation is to evade the truth and psychic pain, while paradox is an expression of psychic complexity and often a surrender to it. The resemblance between paradox and equivocation corresponds to another preoccupation in the book—that is, the capacity of the mind to mime a language adhesively either to beguile or to allay the analytic process. These roadblocks are discussed in Chapter 1.

In a now forgotten paper, "Borderline Phenomena", Sailesh Kapadia (1998) elaborates the grammar of borderline states. He uses the Trishanku myth—about a king who wanted to reach heaven but without dying. In this impossible quest he goes to two rival sages, and while one refuses this, the other encourages this delusion. Eventually he finds himself in the space between heaven and earth. He is always reaching

out and getting thrust back. "Trishanku's final suspended state depicts the subjective experience of a borderline patient" (p. 513). The motion sickness of the borderline state is captured imaginatively here by Kapadia. The syntax resembles that of a paradoxical state of mind, but its grammar is entirely different. It appears to accept both, but its relationship to contraries is one of shuttling and/or evading the pain rather than mourning it. Trishanku can neither bear to die nor to forego heaven. Between the Scylla of unbearable pain and the Charybdis of psychic death, the borderline patient cycles slowly and painfully so as to avoid a breakdown. These states are not fixed or frozen but oscillate between deadness and unbearable pain; between being asleep and awake. However, besides these two possibilities (accepting and denying), one can argue for a third relationship with reality.

Steiner (1993), elaborating on Freud's ideas on fetishistic disavowal, suggests that such persons have perversely disavowed the "facts of life" (Money-Kyrle, 1978). These being "the recognition of the breast as a supremely good object, the recognition of the parents' intercourse as a supremely creative act, and the recognition of the inevitability of time and ultimately death" (p. 443). Taking from this, disavowal may be read as a perverse relationship with reality.

Steiner clarifies that it is not simply the coexistence of contradiction which is perverse:

> The perversion arises as integration begins, and lies in the attempt to find a false reconciliation between the contradictory views which become difficult to keep separate as integration proceeds. Such a reconciliation is not necessary when splitting keeps the contradictory views totally separate and unable to influence each other. The problem only arises as the split begins to lessen and an attempt is made to integrate the two views. (1993, p. 93)

At this juncture, the patient may resort to a psychic retreat, that is neither psychosis nor acceptance of reality, but a third place situated in the middle.

In his discussion of the different models of psychoanalysis, Steiner (1989) writes about the model of perversion. His use of "perverse" harks back to its original meaning of something that was good but has taken a wrong turn. What is perverted here is the relationship with truth and

reality. The perverse patient does take in the analyst, but in ways that twist and distort psychic knowledge.

> I believe that some patients adopt such an attitude to a whole area of reality which they find unacceptable, and that they retreat to a kind of borderline state … which reality is not completely denied and is also not completely accepted. (p. 118)

The script in front of patient and analyst is the same, but they read it from opposite ends of the glass. One is looking at the image straight, the other at its inverse form. Bion (1962) refers to this as "reversible perspective".

Steiner's idea of perversion seems to me to be continuous with Bion's idea of minus links. The analyst is often unable to tolerate the emotions the patient arouses. Rather than tolerate this not knowing, we find ourselves over-listening to words, taking recourse to our favourite psychoanalytic concepts, colluding in different ways with patients because of our own personal terrors—our unanalysed and unreachable limits.

In such encounters, we may collude with our patients in mistaking melancholia for mourning, horror for terror, fear for respect, paradox for a perverse equivocation, masochism for endurance, obsequiousness for gratitude, flattery for love, and so on.

I mention the language of paradox being mimicked by the syntax of equivocation. In politics this may be seen when the state justifies its violence in terms of false equivalence rather than a true recognition of equal rights. This is yet another reason that reliance on verbal communication is misleading. The perverse parts of the mind can adopt the stance of the depressive position. But this is in fact another way of perpetuating delusions and falsehoods. To use a political analogy, states that avow electoral democracy find ways of subverting its significance through the hollowing out of its content, while retaining its form. This is another form of perversion. Unlike a paradox that expands the mind by its refusal to resolve, equivocation maintains the psychic economy by evading the pain. The relationship between paradox and equivocation is discussed as paradigmatic of that between K and -K.

Transitional or autistic spaces

In the post-Covid era the analytic omnipotence over the setting has been completely overthrown. We have had to work on phones, Zoom, Skype. The connections have been unstable, the asymmetry less stark. How did this enormous change affect us? I am only going to mention one point which emerges from the concerns here. The virtual space that opened up provided a transitional space for us to continue despite the sudden breakdown of all familiar contours (Civitarese & Ferro, 2013, p. 127). However, even though the virtual medium lends itself to Winnicott's transitional space, it also does so to Tustin's autistic space. If Winnicott's transitional space offers an imaginative freedom to create (paradoxically only possible when it is recognised as fantasy), Tustin's autistic space is a retreat into a delusional omnipotence (where fantasy takes centre stage by shutting out reality). The autistic part of the psyche can retreat more easily into its enclave.

Also the virtual world opens up different kinds of spaces: between delusion and reality; between fiction and metafiction; virtual spaces can create confusional spaces where the paradox can slip into delusion.

Here I mention a small vignette. Maya is a young woman about twenty-two years old. She wore little girls' dresses and spoke in soft cadences. Her eyes looked half-closed. She tended to stay indoors, no matter where in the world father was posted. She said she had never had friends. Stepping out meant being bullied, so she did not go out of her house. Instead she remained in cyberspace, playing a storytelling game. This involved telling a story about fictional characters who would acquire a shape online. These characters would go into the "world", unlike Maya. Here they would meet other characters created by other storytellers. One of her characters (a young woman) went on dates with someone else's character (a man). She would whisper how terrified she was. I could feel the menace. This man looked like a rapist. But her character was insisting on going ahead. He lived in M (a country considered unsafe) and she had bought her tickets. This space she lived in was not strictly delusional, nor did it acknowledge itself as fictional; instead it was breaching both frames—the fictional and the delusional. What had begun as a fictional impulse had now become "hyperreal". But in not being able to sustain the intermediarity of this experience, in crossing over and becoming her character, Maya (who now took over from

her character) was going to fly across continents and meet a man who like herself was also crossing the line from creating fiction to inhabiting it. In doing so, the author became a character. Bion writes of thoughts needing a thinker, but in Maya's case, the thinker abandons thinking and instead becomes a wild thought. This could be read as an instance of transformation but one that goes towards delusion, rather than towards thinking/reality.

This resembles the -K that could all too easily become the link between the analyst and the analysand. The hyperreality here is emblematic of a compelling world of fantasy where the analyst can only too easily be drawn into being recruited as a co-author and where the distinctions that patrol analytic functioning get confused and collapse, taking the dyad into a collaboration that appears to be knowledge, but is steadily moving towards a folie à deux.

About the chapters

"Language", Bion (1954) writes, "is employed by the schizophrenic in three ways; as a mode of action, as a method of communication, and as a mode of thought" (p. 24). The lexical use of words is only one dimension then. Bion demonstrates how the patient experiences words as concrete things that can either kill or engulf; consequently he feels invaded and attacks them in turn. Interpreting the content of the speech gives way to the location of it, and the affects in the field. Meltzer (Meltzer et al., 1986) takes this even further: when he observes his patient "lalling" (making imperfect, infantile sounds) he feels that there is a "buccal" (in the cheeks and mouth) theatre that is prior to the stage where words (or sound combinations) get linked to meaning and get used to communicate thoughts and feelings. This is, he thinks, "a developmental space that is neither internal nor external in its implications, the 'Buccal Theatre for Generating Meaning', tracing its implications both for speech development and for character" (pp. 181–182).

This kind of communication may be evacuative, but it is still a form of proto-speech and an instance of how when the communication is non-lexical, the chances are that we miss it. On a similar note, Betty Joseph (1982) writes of "chuntering" and Ignes Sodre (2015) of "chantering". In each instance, the patient's semantic communication is meaningless, while it is in the detection of the way in which sounds are used that we

can reach closer to where the patient is located. The use of language may also have a quality which is monotonous or lulling, that invites the analyst to snooze, or else to restore some quiet in his noisy mind through monotonous clucking or a mechanical clearing of his throat.

The book follows Bion's separation of language from communication, and verbal language from non-verbal language, and lexical from non-lexical content such as tone, sounds, rhythm. Here is Civitarese's (2016) eloquent distinction between words and meaning:

> Word representation provides a walkway that stops us from falling into the abyss of infinity and the infinite differences of things in nature … the word 'closes' the meaning, but since it is itself conveyed by what is called the signifier it can never 'close' it completely … Thought comes into being in this fissure as the more or less successful attempt to bridge it. (p. 147)

The impulse to communicate, it seems, is searching for a vehicle to convey it. The words both carry and "miscarry" these communications which are often unformulated. Can we try to retrieve some of what is lost in this movement from experience to words?

Chapter 1 opens by looking at the relationship between language and psychoanalysis. Taking up Bion's (1957) idea of a continuum between the psychotic and non-psychotic parts of the mind, this opening chapter looks at clinical moments where the primitive part—psychotic and "autistic-contiguous" (Ogden, 1992)—mimes language and takes over the analytic field. It is an exploration of rehearsed languages that form "bastions" (Baranger & Baranger, 2008)—in the way patient and analyst collude in semantic exchanges that deceive both about the nature of the analytic treatment going on. The patients discussed seem to intuit the analyst's blind spots and a pseudo-language takes over as primitive parts of the patient collude with mine, but where I am unable to stir myself out of these dark holes. In my work writing became the rope, holding onto which I sometimes managed to return.

Chapter 2 looks at the gap between the vocabulary of psychoanalysis and the prearranged syntax of existing language. Concepts of development incipiently enter clinical spaces and this may shape the form of the analysis. Psychoanalytic clinical writing is not always able to depart

from a certain kind of narrativising. This is somewhat akin to what Bion borrowing again from Keats was to call the distinction between the "Language of Achievement" (which is poetic and closer to dreaming) and the "Language of Substitution" which is like a prose translation of the poetic (Bion, 1970). This gap is important because the linearity of writing that underwires our case histories makes the outcome a dominant force in the session.

Chapter 3 looks at the difference between sentimentality (-L, -H) and emotionality (turbulence). In the stories discussed here we explore aspects of non-lexical communication that may bring us closer to emotional truth, rather than lose orbit through screen memories, nostalgia, and melancholia. The word "regret" is explored not just in the content of the stories but in its different components such as ellipses, tone, syntax, tense, and form. We look at the history of the word as it has historically travelled from "bewailing" to a more narcissistic state, devoid of affect. The different stories discussed here are contrasted as nostalgic (sentimentality, -L, -H) versus truthfully emotional (turbulence is always jostling between L and H). Eventually Coetzee's novel *Disgrace* (2000) tells of a man who is unable to experience feelings till he undergoes his disgrace. The undergoing of a true emotional experience appears to be in itself humbling. It is the -L and -H at the beginning of the novel that painfully gives way through humiliation, and defeat gives way to L, H, and finally K. The contrast between sentimentality and emotionality emerges as analogous to that of screen memory and truth in Freudian terms.

Chapter 4 explores arrogance as a possible link that destroys analysis. It begins by looking at narratives that respond to arrogance either by acknowledging or rejecting it. It seems that while the register of tragedy accepts it, that of Christianity forbids it. Stories seem to be born out of the tension between the flight to grandiosity and its inevitable crashing. Invisible shields of omnipotence promise an escape from unbearable helplessness. The omnipotence of arrogant postures is discussed as a recurrent, almost quintessential trope in myths and while narratives seek to abjure it, recurrence points to its inevitability. The skirmish between its stubborn return and the subsequent fallout seems to engender narrative itself. A look at literary narratives reveals the ubiquity of a syntax that is born out of a tussle with arrogance and yet language itself seems to collapse into some assertion of it, some

form of omnipotence. Is it possible to create narrative without traces of arrogance/omnipotence? Samuel Beckett's "The End" (1946) presents yet another landscape of death-in-life. The abjection of the protagonist and his complete indifference to life create an idiom as remote as possible from arrogance. This effacing of meaning and the negating of the self engender an anti-narrative. And except for stray moments, we can see nothing but the debris of a self. Is this the other to arrogance?

Finally it is with Bion's description of the link between patient and analyst that we see arrogance brought to our door. A small clinical vignette demonstrates that the analytic couple colludes in perpetuating this. Frequently the patient brings the thoughts he is unable to think: this may be seized upon by the analyst, who may in this moment take on the role of the messiah, rather than someone who can enable thinking. This can make for stupidity and arrogance in the link; yet another kind of minus link.

Chapter 5 on parasitism expands on Bion's idea of the parasitic link in analysis. Parasitism has a malignant ring and has been thought of mostly in an intrapsychic way. While this is not without its justification, this perspective could be seen as paranoid from other "vertices". Bearing in mind the discourse of natural sciences, this chapter sees more primitive aspects of what drives parasitism in a "bipersonal field" (Baranger & Baranger, 2008) and attempts a "binocular" (Bion 1962, p. 86) reading towards that. It is suggested that the womb–foetus link may be used paradigmatically to map parasitic relations which could be emerging from an encounter of autistic parts of the patient and analyst. But fundamentally it is about recognising the still "encapsulated" (Tustin, 1986; Bergstein, 2009) parts of our mind that collaborate in the formation of autistic islands. The idea of an ectopic pregnancy which is discussed here imagines the parasitic psyche in some situations as unable to find a place in the womb. It clings to any surface it finds. This space outside the womb but inside the body adds another layer to this effort to theorise minus links.

The first four chapters focus on the limitations of language, while Chapter 5 embodies "multiocular vertices" (Bergstein, 2019, p. 167). Bion seems to suggest vertices as enabling analytic listening. The term vertices is derived from geometry where it is defined as angular points of polygons and other such figures. The term provides an alternative to

perspectives. Clinically, "vertices" (Bion, 1965, p. 90)—which are more dynamic versions of perspectives—place emphasis on lability, attentive movements, and the ever changing moods and tones of the session. In order to retain an emotional link with the patient, the analyst needs to be willing to change the locations from where he listens. This shifting of the vertex is in itself expansive for the mind and it fuels the analytic link.

Unlike ideas of genealogy and history that tend to take away from the dynamic of the ongoing rhythm, the here and now is the best instance of the transient but middle space of the present tense—that lies between the genealogical (preoccupied with the trellis of the past) and the prophetic (projecting onto the future from material of the past). Accordingly, the next chapter will focus on expanding the spaces for thinking and they each happen to use multiocular vertices.

In Chapter 6 it is suggested that the autoimmune system may offer another dimension to the relationship between mind and body. This chapter attempts to supplement Bion's ideas on the mental process resembling the alimentary, respiratory, and muscular systems; it suggests that autoimmune systems seem to be prior to the splitting of mind and body, and seem to correspond to the protomental apparatus proposed by Bion. This apparatus may help us think about the "irrational" outbreaks of symptoms that defy causality. This may also further problems of technique when confronted by primitive forms of communication, where the body is unable to form distinct symptoms, but is suffused by alien sensations.

One of the recurrent themes of the book has been the finite language of psychoanalysis that cannot contain the vision of the unconscious. Truth and lies, failure and success, writing and ineffability remain the tense poles of the axes that criss-cross the body of psychoanalysis. Chapter 7 examines the area between untruth and failure. What constitutes "un-success"? Do we tend to shy away from writing about it? Are we haunted by the outcomes? Is there a way we can think beyond outcomes? These are questions I have raised for further thinking. When what we are fundamentally interested in is the unknowable and wordless unconscious, how do we define truth and untruth?

If at the core of analytic stuckness lie knots of proto-emotions and proto-thoughts, then how are we to redefine the shape of the truth we are in search of? To what extent does our linguistic limitation bind us to

the language of narratives, failures, and success? In this context, I look at instances of "failure" in analysis to trace analytic untruth as a part of the ordinary limitations of the analytic mind. This is opposed to the unconscious omniscience and omnipotence that we carry despite all our commitment to incertitude and fallibility.

If psychoanalysis is concerned with emotional growth, this book considers obstructions to truth in the emotional relationship between the analyst and the analysand. Among these would be analytic allegiance to our particular schools, our inability to forge a technique in the face of the protomental apparatus which can breed arrogance, our complacent use of language, the gaps between our theoretical allegiance and our technique, and finally, all too often our unwillingness to get in touch with our truth. Most fundamentally I would like to think of beginning to write more incisively about the dailiness of failures and limitations—not as exceptions or rescued just in time, but abject failure as well as quotidian failure. The concluding chapter ends with an elegy to loneliness that such thinking about our feelings demands.

With this introduction I hope to have defined the preoccupation with the nature of links that may be forged in liminal spaces that impede thinking. The chapters that follow will hopefully expand on different locations of stunted, obstructed, and perverted thinking. By no means comprehensive, the book only hopes to expand on how we may turn a blind eye to what may be going on in our analytic life.