

## INTRODUCTION

The history of psychoanalysis in America is replete with scarring battles over its relationship to the health-care professions -- that is, whether psychoanalysis is a post-graduate speciality of psychiatry, psychology, and social work, or, rather, a separate and distinct profession. The dominant view in the United States has always been the former, (particularly in relation to medicine), which has had an inestimable influence on American psychoanalytic formation and discourse. Nevertheless, these ongoing controversies have been predominantly internal struggles<sup>[1]</sup> between psychoanalytic schools and professional organizations. The field of psychoanalysis has remained largely independent of federal and state regulations – until now.

This issue has taken on a new urgency as The Psychoanalytic Consortium, a rather unlikely fellowship of the American Psychoanalytic Association, the American Academy of Psychoanalysis, the National Membership Committee on Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work, and the Division of Psychoanalysis of the American Psychological Association (Division 39), has authored and ratified a document called “Standards of Psychoanalytic Education,” which you will find following these preliminary remarks. Over a period of approximately 2 years, these standards underwent at least 20 versions until agreement was finally reached. Each of the four member organizations has ratified the standards, with the American Psychoanalytic Association being the last to do so in May of 2001.

Now that formal ratification has taken place, a new independent entity called the Accreditation Council for Psychoanalytic Education (ACPE) has been formed by the Consortium for the express purpose of applying to the United States Department of Education in order to become the accrediting body for psychoanalytic institutes in America<sup>[2]</sup>. Thus, the Standards of Psychoanalytic Education would become the benchmark by which individual institutes could become “accredited,” that is, formally recognized, by the United States Department of Education by way of the ACPE. What is at stake is the legal and official determination of who can be a psychoanalyst, what “training” is necessary, and ultimately, how psychoanalysis is defined for the public and profession alike.

## THE QUESTION OF LAY ANALYSIS AND THE CONSORTIUM

Pivotal to understanding the current U.S. situation with regard to the Psychoanalytic Consortium and its Standards is an organization called the National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis (NAAP). This important association was formed in 1972 with the explicit mission of establishing psychoanalysis as an independent and legalized profession which would not be the “handmaiden” to the mental health professions, and furthermore, would be recognized as such by the federal and state governments. Against the backdrop of exclusionary and restrictive medicalization, NAAP was created to promote psychoanalysis as a distinctive pursuit which is not assimilable to psychiatry, psychology or social work, and which requires its own specific education and training. As the only American psychoanalytic organization specifically established to follow the creator of psychoanalysis with respect to “lay” analysis, NAAP recognizes members on the basis of their *psychoanalytic* education and training, irrespective of the previous degrees an individual may hold. Founded at a moment when non-medical analysts struggled to obtain psychoanalytic education, supervision, and recognition, NAAP vitally upheld the Freudian tradition by defining psychoanalysis as unique and autonomous with respect to the medical and mental health professions.

NAAP created its own accrediting board, the American Board in Accreditation for Psychoanalysis (ABAP), in order to nationally accredit psychoanalytic institutes according to various criteria, but without reference to school of thought or theoretical allegiance<sup>[3]</sup>. This process is not recognized by any governmental body, but is an internal arrangement whereby institutes can be acknowledged for having met the standards of this professional organization. This is analogous to the accreditation institutes can receive from the American Psychoanalytic Association or the International Psychoanalytic Association, if they meet the established criteria. Since until 1989, accreditation by the American was restricted to institutes which solely trained physicians, and IPA recognition could only be gained via

the American, ABAP provided a vital alternative psychoanalytic accrediting procedure for institutes which trained non-medical (lay) analysts.

The current efforts of the Psychoanalytic Consortium can be traced to NAAP's applications in the late 1980's to become recognized as an external accrediting body for psychoanalysis via ABAP. (These applications were made to two agencies which no longer exist and to the United States Department of Education.) Success would have meant that NAAP/ABAP would become a nationally recognized standard-bearer of psychoanalytic training. Importantly, by becoming an accrediting body for institutes, NAAP would establish a foundation for the eligibility of their members to receive a specific certification in psychoanalysis by state or national boards, which is a significant part of their agenda. In other words, were ABAP to become a nationally recognized accrediting body, it would set the stage for lay analysts to obtain legislatively recognized certification or licensing that other analysts are granted simply by virtue of already being in a licensable mental health profession such as psychiatry, social work, or psychology. This is important to insurance reimbursement, among other things.

NAAP's applications provoked an uproar among the organizations representing analysts who were also mental health professionals. A consortium of psychoanalytic organizations had already formed to lobby around President Clinton's healthcare proposals in 1991. A shift in mission quickly occurred, as combating NAAP's external accreditation bid became the top priority. Notably, although the American Psychoanalytic Association strenuously objected to NAAP's efforts, they were at first reluctant to officially join the Consortium for fear that the other member organizations would "degrade" their training standards. They also feared hostility on the basis of their history of exclusion towards psychologists and social workers. However, by 1995, the American adopted the strategy of embracing all mental health practitioners in order to exclude lay analysts, and they formally joined the Consortium.

The Consortium's response to NAAP's effort was acrimonious, widespread, and well-organized. They testified in front of the authorities NAAP had applied to, insisting that by divorcing psychoanalysis from the health-care professions, NAAP would lower professional standards, threaten the prestige of psychoanalysis, and endanger the public by supporting inadequate evaluation and care. Though NAAP won several appeals over many years of struggle, their applications were ultimately rejected due to the overwhelming opposition mounted by the powerful Consortium. However, once NAAP attempted to gain external accreditation authority, the stage was set. Having defeated NAAP at the federal level, the Consortium became well-positioned to propose themselves to the United States Department of Education as the "legitimate" accrediting body for the profession of psychoanalysis in America, through the ratification of Standards and the creation of the nominally independent ACPE. This effort is now in progress, and has strong prospects for success given the influential status of the organizations involved.

## **THE STANDARDS OF PSYCHOANALYTIC EDUCATION AND LICENSING**

In the meantime, however, NAAP has continued their policy of pursuing recognition from state governments for the independent profession of psychoanalysis via the establishment of state licenses. A licensing law supported by NAAP went into effect in Vermont just a few years ago. And just this year, following many years of NAAP's efforts, a psychoanalytic licensing law was passed in New York State which will go into effect in 2005. This law stipulates a specific license which will regulate the title "psychoanalyst" as well as the designation of a practice as "psychoanalysis."<sup>[4]</sup> The requirements for the NY state license differ markedly from the Consortium's standards, providing far broader latitude regarding psychoanalytic education and training. These requirements include having a master's degree or "the substantial equivalent" and completing a program of study in a psychoanalytic institute chartered by the Board of Regents "or the substantial equivalent". Furthermore, the law specifies that the institute course work should include (but not be limited to) psychoanalytic theory of psychopathology; psychoanalytic theory of psychodiagnosis; personality development; practice technique (including dreams and symbolic processes); and the analysis of resistance, transference and countertransference, among others. Unlike the Consortium standards, there is no frequency requirement for personal analysis or supervised clinical work, though a total number of hours is specified. This set of standards differs in substance and spirit from the Consortium standards, and it is now New York State law.

It would be futile for the Consortium/ACPE to seek accrediting powers while allowing state licensing laws to be passed which contradict their intent and undermine their apparent "victory" over NAAP. In fact, the Consortium is in the process of drafting a letter to be sent to State Legislatures recommending that the Standards for

Psychoanalytic Education serve as the recommended standards for future state licensing. If this effort is successful, the Consortium Standards will occupy the two primary areas of U.S. governmental regulation of professions, accreditation and licensing. Attending an ACPE accredited institute would prepare the way for individual analysts to receive a state license. As one psychologist put it, “It is likely that these standards will determine not only which institutes will be accredited, but future state rules for the licensure of psychoanalysts, grant monies for psychoanalytic education, treatment and research, and insurance benefits.”

This critical moment for psychoanalysis in the United States represents at once a notable repetition and the appearance of something new. While the controversy over lay analysis is quite familiar, what is unprecedented is the appeal of American psychoanalytic associations to the State for its resolution. While NAAP’s original bid to become a recognized accreditation body had tangible, affirmative stakes for its members, the formation of the Consortium, the writing of the Standards, and the creation of the ACPE have no such benefits attached to them. These steps constitute a defensive strategy which originates in fear; manifestly, the concern over the possible denigration of psychoanalysis. However, the logic of this defense is problematic, as we see the practitioners of psychoanalysis denying its specificity in the very name of its future. We are reminded of the old joke in which the doctor proudly announces that he has cured the illness, with the only unfortunate side effect being the death of his patient.

For all our grave concerns, the Consortium Standards nevertheless provide us with a compelling reason to revisit the essential question of psychoanalytic transmission and formation. The question is, can we create a space for such a debate before a premature legal conclusion forecloses the possibility? We invite your participation.

---

[1] With some notable exceptions, such as the GAPPP suit. In 1985, a Federal antitrust class action suit alleging restraint of trade and monopoly practices involving both training and the provision of psychoanalytic treatment was filed against the American Psychoanalytic Association by the Group for the Advancement of Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis in Psychotherapy (GAPPP). It was not until 1989 that this lawsuit was settled in an agreement that provided for psychologists to be admitted to the institutes of the American, changing the policy which had formerly permitted only psychiatrists to train with a few minor exceptions. In 1991, some 80 years after its organization, the American voted to allow eligibility for psychoanalytic training to doctoral level psychologists and social workers.

[2] The creation of a new entity is due to legal issues which necessitate that the accrediting body be independent from the associations which comprise the Consortium.

[3] As of the publication of their 1996 directory, 17 U.S. institutes were accredited by ABAP, including those which identify themselves as “Freudian,” “Modern Freudian,” “Jungian,” and “Adlerian.”

[4] The law provides for some exemptions from the licensing requirement, for example, those who hold a state license in medical or mental health professions (i.e., psychiatry, psychology, social work, registered nursing) will be able to call themselves “psychoanalysts,” although no one will be able to call themselves a “licensed