

The "Crucial Juncture": The Intrapsychic Story of Integration in a Borderline Patient

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Abstract: In this paper I shall describe the intrapsychic process whereby borderline patients identify with their analyst's functions, in the patient's attempt to integrate libidinally and aggressively invested self- and object images.

We often speak of the "crucial juncture" in analysis, to identify the point where a borderline or narcissistic patient begins to pull together his opposing self and object images, to create integrated units. This crucial juncture is reached when the patient becomes able to tame his exaggeration of aggression, which is invested in his "bad" self- and object images, as well as his exaggeration of the idealization of "good" images.

Crucial Juncture

Melanie Klein brought to our attention issues that pertain to the development of ambivalence in the borderline patient, when he begins to relate to the same object (and its mental representation) with love and hate simultaneously. The advent of this milestone is what is meant by a "crucial juncture" (Klein 1946). Thus, developmental occurrences in childhood can be observed in the borderline adult when he reaches this point. Failure to reach a "crucial juncture" in childhood causes the adult to be stuck in a personality organization in which splitting predominates as a defense.

Klein (1946) wrote: "The synthesis between the loved and hated aspects of the complete object gives rise to the feelings of mourning and guilt which imply vital advances in the infant's emotional and intellectual life. This is also a crucial juncture_for the choice of neurosis or psychosis" (p. 100). In contemporary terminology, we say that the choice lies between neurotic and borderline personality organizations. We speak of the individual as having a psychotic organization if, in addition to his inability to integrate, he is unable also to differentiate between his self images and object images, and between one object image and another (Volkan 2015).

Otto Kernberg (1970), discussing the treatment of the patient with a narcissistic personality organization, returned to Melanie Klein's crucial juncture. A person with a narcissistic personality organization, like a person with a borderline personality organization, primarily utilizes defensive splitting. Such a person separates his grandiose self from his devalued self

and object units. Kernberg states that the pathological narcissistic self-structure (the grandiose self) is resolved in analysis when the patient becomes aware that his ideal concept is basically a fantasy structure. At this point narcissistic transference yields to transference neurosis. Kernberg states that "the deep admiration and love for the ideal mother" and "the hatred for the distorted dangerous mother" meet in this transference. He observes that at this crucial point the patient experiences depression and suicidal thoughts "because he has mistreated the analyst and all the significant persons in his life, and he may feel that he has actually destroyed those whom he could have loved and who might have loved him" (p. 81).

I (Volkan 1974, 1976, 1987, 1995, 2010) have described the clinical manifestations of patients with borderline personality organization in analysis, who reach the crucial juncture. My focus has been on the expression of structural changes as they are reflected in dreams, transference, and countertransference. Klein referred to the presence of both mourning and depression (guilt feelings) when the crucial juncture is reached, while Kernberg mainly emphasized depression. Although I am aware that the evolution of guilt feelings is part of the progression in the treatment of severely regressed and/or undeveloped individuals, my own experience with patients at the crucial juncture indicates that mourning is more prominent and that depressive experiences are limited. Mourning itself is a new experience for these patients, and its appearance suggests possibilities for a positive outcome (Searles 1986). Furthermore, I have never had a patient, either borderline or narcissistic, who developed genuine suicidal ideation at this time of his treatment. I should add that the dominance of mourning over depression at the crucial juncture, that has been my experience, might be due to my emphasis on a certain type of technique.

Earlier, I (Volkan 1987) suggested that for practical purposes, we should divide the intensive approaches to the treatment of patients whose defensive responses are centered around splitting, into two styles. The first approach maintains the already regressed patient at a level where he is able to function *without* further regression. The strategy behind this method is to focus on providing new ego experiences for the patient, with interpretations, clarifications, and confrontations kept within the therapeutic setting and calculated to promote his integration of opposing self-images and corresponding opposing object images. I feel that while this approach may be therapeutic, it does not provide for a major structural change in the core of the pathological psychic organization.

The second approach is based on the premise that regressed or undeveloped patients should experience further regression, even though such patients would most likely exhibit temporary, but therapeutically controlled, transference psychosis. After such regressive experiences these patients would begin to relax their defensive use of splitting, and replace it with *developmental* splitting. Bear in mind that all children experience developmental splitting, due to the lack of their integrative function. Eventually, with the development of this function, children are able to reach a naturally expected crucial juncture. When the child's integrative function is taxed and disturbed due

to constitutional, internal, or environmental factors, splitting becomes permanent and is utilized defensively.

Once an adult patient is back on the track of developmental splitting, following a therapeutic regression, upward-evolving transference (Boyer 1971, 1983) develops and takes the patient to a point where opposing self- and object images, together with their accompanying affects, will meet. The patient who undergoes this type of treatment is "prepared," during the initial years of his analysis, to reach and pass through the crucial juncture without much guilt and certainly without much depression or suicidal thoughts.

Patients with borderline personality organizations are involved in *introjective-projective relatedness* (Volkan 1976, 1981, 1987, 1995, 2010). In therapy, such relatedness to the analyst determines common transference and countertransference developments (Volkan, 1993, 2010). Within the realm of patient-analyst interactions, the patient identifies with various functions of the analyst, including identification involving the integrative function, which supports the patient's progressive development. The patient's arrival at a crucial juncture is the result of collective accumulation within the patient's psyche of all necessary identifications. Once the patient comes to the crucial juncture, he is ready to experience mourning over surrendering his old splitted self and splitted object images.

The analyst should not conclude on the basis of the surface clinical picture that mending of opposite units has occurred; he needs evidence of the intrapsychic expression of integration in order to have psychoanalytic confirmation that a genuine structural change has begun or occurred within the analysand's psychic organization. This paper reports such an intrapsychic story.

The Analysand: Hamilton Edwards

I shall call my patient Hamilton Edward. I shall not give his detailed case history, but I shall provide sufficient information about him so that the reader will be prepared to understand the patient's dreams and his associations to them at the point when he reached the crucial juncture.

When I began working with Hamilton Edward, he was a fifty-seven-year-old factory owner. He had blond hair and a graying mustache, and looked much younger than his years. Some of his wealth had passed on to him from previous generations in his family, but he seemed to be a capable person in his own right. He was able to build on what he had inherited and could certainly be considered successful. He smiled pleasantly and was well dressed. I did not notice anything when we first met to suggest that he was suffering from borderline personality organization. But my diagnostic interviews and our analytic sessions on the couch four times a

week proved differently. Behind his seemingly open oedipal preoccupations, there was a psychic organization in which opposites could not be integrated.

Hamilton Edward described himself as a "woman addict." He told me that his "addiction" started during his youth. He had scores of women. He was married when he was a university student, but continued to have other women as well. His first wife died and fifteen years later he married again. The second marriage lasted only a little over a year. After his separation from his second wife, he began collecting women frantically, juggling them into "good" and "bad" camps, and he became anxious. This is why he sought psychoanalysis.

The following is a summary of his initial complaints:

1-He could not bear to be alone at night, fearing the dark and entertaining fears of being shot. He sought to deal with this fear by having a woman with him every night.

2-He could not have the same woman for two consecutive nights, but might return to a woman after an intervening night with someone else.

3-Although he considered each new woman to be an angel at the outset of their association, she soon became a "devil" in his mind.

4-He would not acknowledge rejection, and persisted in trying to gain the favor of women who had rejected him as long as seven or eight years earlier. With one woman, he continued to take flowers to her even though she threw them in his face and slammed the door. He would not take a "No" seriously.

5-He had "spare" women he could call on whenever his first choice was not available.

6-He dated only women who were between thirty and forty years old, and was instantly attracted by the combination of black hair, tanned skin, and a slender body.

7-His outward behavior with his women was always impeccable in public, but he was quick to feel betrayed by any who disappointed him, even in a trivial way, and longed to punish them.

8-When his first wife died, she was cremated, and he kept her ashes in a box. This indicated that he could not separate himself from her. When he married his second wife, unbeknownst to her he took the box of ashes with him to his new marital home. Whenever he had a quarrel with the second wife, he "slept" with the ashes of the first wife in another room. He had to maintain the images of a "good" and "bad" woman. This is how he remained faithful to his second wife, for about a year, something he had never done previously with any other woman.

9-One time or another he had been involved in sexual liaisons with various relatives: a sister, a step-mother-in-law, a sister-in-law, etc. At the beginning of his analysis he did not exhibit any remorse about such activities, but he did admit extreme fear that he would be found out and even killed.

10-If one of his ex-girlfriends found a new escort Hamilton Edward would become very jealous and think of murdering his successor. Such thoughts made him afraid of walking alone to his car in an empty parking lot.

Hamilton Edward had suffered from early object losses in his life. When he was young, an African-American girl named Abigail, who was probably in her late teens at the time, was assigned to take care of him. Apparently, she doted on her charge, who was fed and pampered in the servant's quarters and was treated like "the little king." One weekend, when Hamilton was four years old, Abigail disappeared. The explanation seems to have been that Hamilton's parents discovered that Abigail was pregnant, and they dismissed her at once. He never saw her again, but in the course of his analysis it became clear that he sought to "recreate" her in scores of other women.

Hamilton Edward's family moved soon after Abigail's dismissal. The Great Depression [A severe economic depression started in the United States in 1929 and lasted until late 1930s] had set in, bringing economic hardship and anxiety to the boy's father. His mother had more children. Hamilton's "screen memory" from this time period concerned his gazing out from a cold glass window to a frozen field, feeling deserted. He certainly experienced childhood depression. He had a second "screen memory" also. This one concerned his seeing his mother bathe herself in his parents' bathroom. He saw her beautiful breasts which he called "nanas."

This bathroom was also a "torture chamber" where Hamilton would be severely beaten by his father, on and off, for the child's "own good." Hamilton's mother and maternal grandmother would also join in on the physical abuse in order to make him develop a "good character." For example, after a wonderful meal on Sundays and after returning from church, at the direction of his grandmother, Hamilton's mother would beat the child. He was also given enemas.

Hamilton Edward grew up without integrating the mental images of the women in his life. There was his beloved black woman Abigail and the Abigail who abruptly "rejected" him. There was the mother with the beautiful breasts who could not be put together with the mother who beat him with bushes that she would cut from a tree. When he was at the oedipal age, Hamilton's mother was depressed and busy with her new babies, and his father was anxious about financial matters and distant. Hamilton wanted to be like his father, but he could not tame the Hitler-like image of the father who abused him in the bathroom: he could not integrate it with the image of an idealized father.

Hamilton Edward made a life long "adjustment" to his personality organization by constantly seeking out "good" objects: women who had the characteristics of his mother in her thirties when, as a child, he saw her breasts; and women who, like Abigail, had dark skin and were slender. These "good" objects invariably turned sour, however, and Hamilton either would punish them or fear being punished by them.

In spite of his business successes, Hamilton Edward approached his occupational interests and his life in general in the same way that he approached women. He managed to stay in debt most of the time despite his wealth, making vast amounts of money at times and losing money at other times. Basically, it was like being in a private prison. He behaved like a gambler and was always anxious that objects (people) could make or break him. It will not surprise the reader to learn that he spent a great deal of time in court, winning or losing suits he brought against others or which others brought against him. His life was ritualized as though he were a constant traveler between "good" and "bad" self- and object images. For him the world was either "black" or "white." He saw and experienced no "gray."

During the early years of his analysis Hamilton Edwards developed a *split transference*. There were no links between his sessions. For example, after speaking during one session about some event or some new person, he would repeat this communication the next day or the next week as though it had not been mentioned before. Each session was divided into two parts. The first part was rather formal: he behaved like the "perfect" analysand, seemingly following my direction to "free associate." During the second part of the sessions he became playful. Eventually we both came to understand that in each session he correlated his childhood experiences — of a formidable, punishing mother/father and a playful Abigail/mother with beautiful "nanas" — with the mental representations he projected onto me.

During the seventh month of Hamilton's analysis I had to attend a meeting on a Wednesday morning. I told Hamilton this during his Monday session, and I asked him if he could change his Wednesday morning session to the afternoon. It was then that he informed me that he had an appointment with his other therapist that afternoon. It is interesting to note that the idea of his having another therapist did not greatly surprise me. Just as he required more than one woman in his life, he also had to have more than one therapist. I told him that one of us in my room needed to be a "total being" and that I could not continue to be his analyst if I were concretely divided. Upon hearing this he gave up his other therapist.

It is beyond the scope of this paper, to provide further details about Hamilton Edward or his analysis, but I believe this brief introduction will serve to help the reader focus on Hamilton's arrival at the "crucial juncture."

A CRUCIAL JUNCTURE:

During the first three years of his analysis, on three separate occasions I mentioned to Hamilton that he seemed to divide himself and the people around him into "black" and "white" categories, and that it was difficult for him to make "gray." Early in his third year of analysis, Hamilton informed me that he understood on an emotional level what it meant to integrate opposing mental images. He came up with his own metaphor pertaining to a "crucial juncture." He spoke of Mafia men who were fed lavishly and kissed on the lips and then killed summarily. One minute the man was being loved and the next minute he was being destroyed. The idea of "love" and "hate" meeting at one point was a *new* experience for Hamilton. Intellectually he knew that the same woman he wished to punish one day was being perceived by him in an ideal manner the day or the month before, but he could not identify the emotion that accompanied the change. In other words, he did not know what it was like to love and hate simultaneously, since experiencing grayness was not part of his psychic repertoire.

The analyst's two absences: Three years and six months after Hamilton Edward's analysis began, I had to absent myself from my office for a period of ten days because of an overseas trip. I resumed working with Hamilton on my return, only to leave again after two weeks for another overseas trip that lasted three weeks. Hamilton was not given any reason for my absences, but he was told beforehand that I would not be available to him on two separate occasions.

Before I left for my first trip, Hamilton fantasized that I was taking my two vacations in order to have affairs with different women. I told him in layman's terms that he was projecting onto me his own self-image of someone in search of women; I explained further that this fantasy meant that he was trying to deny the separation between us, since wherever I went I would be carrying him within me through his projected identification in me. I knew that his attempts to identify with me were part of his response to the two separations. His reaction to this unusual interruption in his analysis was evident in the first dream that I am reporting below, in which his wish to identify with me was clear. If we were one and the same (identified with each other) there would be no separation. I focus here on the content and nature of his identifications, in which his intrapsychic reflections of reaching the crucial juncture appears.

A summary of the two-week period between my absences:

Monday: On returning from my first trip I was welcomed by Hamilton Edward and told that he had no idea where I had been, that he supposed I had attended some professional meeting. This was realistic on his part. He was glad to have me back. He said that during the ten days of my absence he had felt relatively contented and had not gotten into any mischief, as I might have

expected. He joked about not having published any advertisements for women. During the initial years of his analysis, whenever a separation between us occurred, he would place advertisements in certain magazines for dates with slender women in their thirties. Once, he had travelled to a foreign country to try to date a Turkish woman. [The analyst is of Turkish origin who had immigrated to the USA years earlier].

Although he seemed to be psychologically "healthy" when I saw him on the Monday of my return, he left his trench coat on while on the couch and this puzzled me. It was a cool spring day and although he had come in wearing a coat, ordinarily he would take his coat off before lying down. On my couch, clad in a trench coat, he looked like a caricature of a spy, and my first thought was that he wanted to spy on me to discover what I had done while I was away. As I watched, it became apparent that he was using his coat to protect his body, and his turned-up collar seemed to be protection for his neck. In the past he had often thought of me as "a terrible Turk" capable of beheading him with a scimitar. I concluded that, despite his pleasure at seeing me, and in spite of his telling me how well he had been during my absence, he was afraid, perhaps of me. I decided to see what would develop and therefore did not say much during this session.

Wednesday: We did not have a session on Tuesday, but on Wednesday Hamilton Edward lay on the couch without his coat. He told me he had learned that his first cousin's daughter was leaving her husband. The woman was in her late thirties, and she lived some distance away. At this point in his analysis Hamilton had managed to control his frantic search for idealized women. He had been dating the same woman, Michelle, for nine months, but this affair came to an end before our separation. He was only dating a few "regulars" and could now tolerate being without a woman some nights. He had not reported any need for impulsive dating for some time, but the news about his cousin's daughter led him to consider dating her. Then he heard my voice *within him*, as though it were an unassimilated superego part of him, saying "You should not do this." I had never given him such an order explicitly, so it seems that he was projecting a prohibition onto my object representation within him.

Hamilton did not call the woman, even after acquiring her telephone number. He considered this restraint a sign of success, and was pleased with himself. Despite his gratification he did not report this incident to me immediately on my return. I told him that I had noticed that he kept his trench coat on during his Monday session on the couch, and that I sensed this was an attempt by him to protect himself from "the terrible Turk" — me. He then saw me not only as a censor but also as someone who might punish him for exhibiting a derivative of his old incestuous impulses. He agreed, and displayed new insight by remarking that the return of his incestuous impulses and/or need to find a new woman was a response to our separation. He then reported that contrary to his success in controlling his impulse to date his cousin's daughter, he had done something stupid and given into another impulse between our Monday and Wednesday sessions.

On Tuesday, an acquaintance named Harold Nelson came to Hamilton's office to discuss some property that was up for sale. Assuming that the property in question was worth about \$110,000, Hamilton *impulsively* offered \$100,000 without further investigation. In his fantasy he would make a profit of \$10,000 on the resale of the property, but a visit to his purchased land brought him back to reality. The truth was that it would fetch no more than \$90,000, so his impulsive buying had cost him \$10,000.

Hamilton was irritated with himself because he had been able to say "No" to one impulse but not to another. He had idealized the property in his fantasy, and convinced himself that he needed to have it immediately, without considering whether or not it would be good for him. He said he wanted to stop taking contrary actions, as he had done, and wished he could *integrate* his responses to tempting offers that he knew should realistically be evaluated first. He ended the session by recalling how I had told him in the past that I perceived he had a problem making gray — that it could be achieved by blending black and white, and by putting a border around his impulses.

Thursday: Hamilton's preference for gray and making borders appeared in his Wednesday night dream, which he reported on Thursday. He said he dreamt of the farm where he grew up and spent his childhood. A piece of land on the farm was being cleared by bulldozers to be turned into a preserve where nature could take its course, new vegetation could grow, and animals would be encouraged to live. Workmen were nailing down brass signs marking the borders: they bore the logo of the University of Virginia [At this time the author was a faculty member of the University of Virginia]. The soil was *gray*, although in reality that region has red soil.

Hamilton reported a second dream immediately after the first. In this one a black teenager identified as Morris, Abigail's brother, seized Hamilton Edward by the hands and ordered him to get down on his knees. In college Hamilton had been on a wrestling team, and at one point he had a match with an opponent whose hands were uncommonly strong. The dream brought this to mind. In it, Hamilton Edward was forced to his knees, and asked by Morris to perform fellatio. Recognizing this as a homosexual act, Hamilton Edward tried different wrestling maneuvers, but could not overpower Morris.

The day residue of the first dream included his having noticed for the first time that his bedroom walls had been painted. They did not look yellow, as they were supposed to, but were *gray* instead, since yellow paint had been applied over the existing rose color that he had disliked for some time but had not bothered to change until I went away. While talking about this dream he spoke of a conversation we once had about equating making gray with a capacity for psychic integration. He then recalled another dream that he had reported a year earlier. In this dream he was in college and a member of the wrestling team, but he was

wearing pink trunks that made him look effeminate. Before going to sleep it had occurred to him that making gray would mean not only an attempt at integration but also an effort to be manly — changing *rose pink* to *gray*.

In his first dream, the University logo represented me, inasmuch as I was a professor at the University of Virginia and I conduct his analysis at my office, which is on University grounds. The brass markers evoked an association to a dream reported six months earlier, in which he was examining issues on a phallic level, superimposed over the oral and anal aspects of his search for the perfect woman and his need to have many women available to him. In this dream he had seen a Roman flag holder made of brass and broken in two. Since "brass" brought "big brass" (persons of importance) to mind, this mainly represented his idealized, narcissistic self. The top of the flag holder had many snakelike protrusions that represented his fear of castration (broken flag holder), of not being as big as his brother or father. If he had many penises (and, correspondingly, many women), he could defend himself against his worries about castration.

I was the big brass in this dream; his childhood omnipotence had been projected onto the image of the father/analyst. The dream represented his transporting me to his childhood through identification with a strong oedipal father. I was clearing part of his psychic space, to be an integrated (gray) locus for a new life (ego and superego). He commented with insight that his analysis (identification with my functions) had enabled him to say "No" to his impulse toward his cousin's daughter.

Hamilton provided some further details of his first dream, saying that the gray color of the soil was not soothing but that it reminded him of the color of Nazi uniforms. I suggested he might perceive his wish to take me in to show him how to make gray and set limits as alarming, because of his childhood experience with his father. I noted that he wanted to identify with his father, who had, in fact, beaten and humiliated him. I made reference to his perception of me entering him (as symbolized by the University logo displayed in his newly developing psychic area), and Morris's semen entering him. He had to take a strong man into himself to gain strength, but he dreaded submission. I said that his father had symbolically and aggressively "raped" him in his childhood and that, although he had been helpless at the time, he felt aggression toward his father and now toward me as well, perceiving me as terrifying and "all bad." He needed me to be strong to be a model for identification. But still he could not make me gray except in terms of Nazi gray, and he did not yet find the gray soil soothing. We needed to understand further the aggression in our interaction. He seemed able to hear this and to understand it.

Although he is not Jewish, Hamilton had recently become interested in Hitler, and was reading about him in order to master his fear of a torturing father representation. I made a resistance interpretation of his perception of my entering him as a homosexual attack. I said that as long as he modeled me

after Hitler, like a punitive father, it would be hard for him to take me in and retain the insights our work together was bringing him.

Friday: He continued associating in his dreams, and spoke about a rose-colored toilet in his house. It was cracked, and on the day before having his two dreams he had called a *dentist* to repair it, under the assumption that a dentist would know “*how to mend cracks*” in any kind of enamel or ceramic surface. He was unaware of the symbolic meaning of this, or of the significance toilets had had in his childhood. At first the dentist he contacted laughed at this bizarre suggestion, but he did mend the crack with some adhesive, and Hamilton Edward was overwhelmed by his kindness.

We discussed how he was putting a frightening, drilling, castrating, attacking father image onto that of a caring, kind father. Once again, he was making gray by merging a frightening dentist with a kind one. As his father/analyst representation became better integrated and less laden with aggression, the gray would become more soothing.

Anyone like Hamilton Edward who is unable to integrate preoedipal object images cannot integrate father images at the oedipal level. Only in analysis can the father representations and the corresponding superego identifications (ego ideal and superego proper) be integrated, as the patient identifies with the analyst's integrative ego functions.

Second Monday: Hamilton Edward began this session by reporting a new dream in which he saw his childhood home, a three-story farmhouse. The attic looked larger in the dream than it had really been. He knew that this dream referred to his efforts to change his inner psychic structure. Old family letters were stored in the attic, and when he was little his mother had asked him to take this or that box filled with family mementoes up there. The attic stood for the psychic container in which he kept stories of his family, both good and bad ones.

Hamilton's parents came from “good backgrounds,” but his family was not without its “secrets” — about sordid things like whippings, enemas, the need to make perfect stools, and depression. Hamilton Edward recalled taking a sister to the attic and undressing her there. His family secrets included incest.

Hamilton worried in his dream lest the ceiling of the attic be weak, although he thought of the house as being solid. I surmised that the attic represented metapsychologically his superego, which needed not only to be enlarged, but made benign.

Second Wednesday: Hamilton reported that my upcoming separation might take me to Turkey, and he wondered if upon my return I would be the same.

He spoke of my “two sides.” Although I was always dignified and nice to him, he said, he had an image of me also as a “barbarous Turk” with scimitars. When first on my couch he had

occasionally put his hand behind his neck to keep me from beheading him. Then he would dream of presenting me with a shish-kebab grilled in the Turkish way, over an open fire. I suggested that he might be afraid that a trip to Turkey would contaminate me with aggression so that on my return I would beat him up. Laughing nervously, he said, "I am trying to integrate you too!" He recalled that one of his sons had spoken of a giant *open market* in Turkey, saying, "They have all kinds of things there. You'll like that place, Father!"

Second Thursday: He opened this session by saying he felt more capable of holding onto what he was learning in his analysis. On the previous night he had visited one of his children and had thoroughly enjoyed his grandchildren, who seemed very healthy and happy. It occurred to him that he had done better than his parents in rearing his own children; he had never beaten them. In turn, his sons were doing better than he in rearing his grandchildren, of whom he felt very proud. Then he reported a dream:

I was going to a large field. A woman was with me as I drove there in a car. In order to get there we had to drive through an *open market*. It was in a village populated by African Americans. They were selling various things, including bananas. Harold Nelson was on a horse in a Western type saddle. His foot was caught in the saddle, and I told him, "You don't know how to ride a horse; get off and let me get on it."

The scene changed; I was in the land I had set out for. I knew that it was a place near my home town, called Deer Fork. On this land stood a house I thought of as skimpy.

Harold Nelson had visited Hamilton Edward's office on the previous day. He was the seller of the land for which Hamilton Edward had paid \$100,000, only to realize later that this impulsive purchase had lost him \$10,000.

Another day residue in the dream could be found in his having attended a social event to raise money for a charity on the night he had the dream. As he entered the building where this event took place, he noticed an African American woman at the entrance, collecting invitations at a stand. He asked her to dance, and then began to wonder what people might think of his dancing with a black partner. He worried, and wondered why. He recalled having gone to Jamaica with his father and older sister after his first wife's death. They rented a house for a week and employed a black cook with whom Hamilton Edward had danced on one occasion. At the party he realized at last that his anxiety was due to his displacement of Abigail's image onto his dance partner. He recalled his parents' dismissal of Abigail, and their failure to appreciate his attachment to her but, having internalized my approval of his attachment, he felt free to dance with the black woman without anxiety.

Continuing to associate in the dream, he said that the woman accompanying him to the big field was me, representing a *new* mother. The open market in Jamaica was superimposed onto the open market in Turkey, to which his son had made reference. The image of the open

market run by African Americans included images of the new mother/Turkish analyst and the "good" Abigail. Bananas were breasts; as a child he had called his mother's breasts "nanas." New nutriment from the bountiful analyst/"good" Abigail/"good" mother enabled him to say "No" to the impulses represented by Harold Nelson, and to travel to Deer Fork.

Hamilton told how he had encountered a pathway divided in two, forming a fork. Robert Frost, the poet, came to mind with his poem about a fork in the road where one has to choose. One may stick to a familiar road, repeating rituals, or courageously choose the "road less traveled on." Hamilton Edward said he had chosen the latter in his dream. It took him to a house that represented his new psychic core: integrated but "skimpy" — not yet well developed. In his associations here he recalled more about his dream. Located *behind* the skimpy house there was another one which someone had the job of watching over, to protect its contents. I reminded him that I was sitting *behind* him.

Reconstruction of the mother's depression

Our last session before I left for three weeks was one of the most important in Hamilton's analysis. During that hour we came to understand why, during his childhood, his mother had been sunk in the depression that was so largely responsible for his being fixated in a borderline personality organization.

Second Friday: This session opened with the following report of a dream Hamilton called "peculiar":

It consisted of two words: *Numbers* and *Preservation*.

Then I saw numbers from 1 to 6. But one of the numbers was missing. It was number 3. It was left out. Three was missing.

The day residue of this dream came from Hamilton's having attended a dinner party given by one of his women friends. They had known one another for years, and had been lovers from time to time. After separating from Michelle, Hamilton had begun to see this woman, Margaret, often, without trying either to idealize her or devalue her. By then there was no urgency about having a woman every night, although sometimes he dated other women than Margaret, with whom he was comfortable.

At Margaret's dinner table, in addition to the hostess there were a couple and a lone man besides Hamilton Edward. There were six chairs set for the five people. Hamilton Edward and the other single man sat at the ends of the rectangular table, and the couple were on one long end, with Margaret on the other. One person seemed to be missing. This missing 3 was the analyst, who was going away for 3 weeks, but Hamilton Edward sensed that the missing

analyst represented something more important. He suddenly realized that until then, three-and-a-half years into his analysis, it had never occurred to him to tell me about a *missing sibling*. So, I learned for the first time that his parents had had six children, the eldest of whom, a girl, died from pneumonia during her first year of life. Only five children survived, and Hamilton Edward had always spoken of being one of five when, actually, he was the *third* survivor among the siblings. The baby's death was referred to in the family as "The Tragedy," and he had heard reference to it as a child. He could not remember his dead sister's name at first, but it came to him, along with memories of his mother's depression. Hamilton now understood that the word *preservation* concerned preservation of the dead child's memory in his mother's mind. He was sure that his mother had suffered from post-partum depression after the birth of each of the last two daughters, and that her bouts of depression were due to her guilt-ridden, unfinished, complicated mourning over her first baby's death. His mother had certainly been depressed when the family moved to a new location after Abigail's departure: his maternal grandmother had died at about this time also. It seems likely that in Hamilton's mother's mind, the move from the location where her first baby was buried and the loss of her mother activated emotions connected with her child's death. Because of her depression she was unable to help her son with his own depression and the evolution of his developing a more cohesive personality organization. Hamilton Edward began using splitting defensively and constantly searched for good idealized objects in order to deny his childhood despair.

In his first year with me Hamilton had spoken of grieving neighbors. When he was a child, the teenage daughter of a farm family had died. Her parents had a photograph of their daughter taken after her death, and they hung it in their living room, where it held a strong fascination for little Hamilton Edward. She looked alive in it.

Some six months after her death her parents had her *exhumed* for a last glimpse and farewell, but they were so horrified at the sight of her corpse that they quickly reburied it. Hamilton Edward had been greatly impressed by this bizarre tale, which he mentioned several times. He now realized that he had concealed both sad family stories. Although he was not a replacement child, the image of a dead sibling had contributed to his defensive creation of an idealized mother/Abigail image apart from the image of his depressed mother. His understanding of his need to have an idealized woman image to deny his experience with a depressed mother allowed him to integrate further female images in general, and hence to test reality more accurately. He now realized that he was *not* the special child in the picture of his mother with a child that was hanging in his parents' bedroom; the child in the picture was the one who had died.

LATER WORK

The details of two weeks of our work three and a half years into his analysis reflects Hamilton Edward's identification with the analyst as he attempted to integrate his opposing self- and object images. Now, I will report two brief vignettes, one from the end of the fourth year of his analysis and the second one from the beginning of the fifth year, to illustrate the continuing effects of our analytic work. Repeated therapeutic regressions enabled him to work through the influence of early object losses so that he resolved his object-relations conflicts and truly achieved an integrative ability.

Finding the Lost Breast: One Monday toward the end of the fourth year of his analysis, Hamilton reported a dream after attending a wedding in an African American church on the preceding Sunday: I went to a black church. I looked up and saw a choir at the balcony singing. A black man (who, in reality, was a workman at one of his factories, and who had bulging eyes) led the choir. He was singing passionately, and broke into a sweat. He took his shirt off, leaving his roly poly chest exposed. On the previous day Hamilton Edward had gone to his son's home and played with his grandson, who pretended to be a rag doll lying on his grandfather's chest. Hamilton Edward enjoyed playing with his grandson, who pulled up his shirt, exposed his stomach, and smiled at him, reminding his grandfather of a little cuddly puppy from his childhood, named Roly Poly. Through interpretations of an earlier dream Hamilton Edward knew that the church balcony in his current dream stood for the breast. The singer stood for the nipple; passionate songs came out of his mouth. My analysand was positioned beneath the balcony, drinking in the music. Roly poly flesh, sweat, and joyful feelings were related to this nursing experience.

Hamilton said, "I can almost recall nursing at the breast. I remember drinking from a bottle. It had a rubber nipple. It's funny, I almost remember sucking my mother's breast!" I suggested there might have been a time when he was loved and fed joyfully by his mother before her depression took over. "You are remembering what you really lost," I said.

He blinked, looked sad, and told me that the night he had this dream he had not gone out, did not call a woman, felt no anxiety, and enjoyed reading a book in bed. While he had no ritualistic need for a woman's breast, in his dream he found the bountiful breast. He came to my office the next day in a running suit, saying he had not had time to change. I sensed that he was a "baby" lying on my couch dressed informally. He squirmed when he told me he was sure he had been his mother's darling before she was overcome by depression, and his squirming raised his sweat shirt above his abdomen. He was showing me his roly-poly tummy.

I told him it was not clear whether I was nursing him or he was nursing me, but it didn't matter; between us we had created the breast he had lost. He laughed joyfully, and toward the close of the session he recalled a picture of his mother reading the Bible. This was the depressed mother preoccupied with her dead child. "She first fed me, then she left me," he said. "But she is the *same* woman."

Giving up Abigail: Two-and-a-half months after finding the "lost" breast, Hamilton Edward reported dreaming of being in the African American section of a town under restoration:
This area was changing color. I bought a house, but a black woman was living there.

She was in a strange room shaped like a funnel. He went on to explain that by "changing color" he meant that the dream's locale was becoming a business section for whites after having been a residential section for blacks only. The shape of the black woman's room reminded him of the horn-shaped speaker on the old Victrola record player of his family's that he had loved to crank up to hear Caruso sing. He then went on to sing himself, something he had never done before on my couch. Instead of singing an operatic aria like Caruso he began singing, in dialect, the African American song, "It ain't agwine to rain no more." [It is not going to rain more]

He reported that the black woman in the funnel-shaped room had gray hair, and wore glasses. I thought that since I had gray hair and wore glasses, I was condensed in the transference with this woman's image. Suddenly he recalled that the woman was the laundry woman who had worked for his family during his childhood. She was called "aunt," he said, and then he corrected himself. "No, only a real aunt was called 'aunt.' Black old women were called 'auntie'." I said, "Ain't no more? Auntie no more? A black woman no more?" To this he replied by shouting, "Abigail is gone!" He realized that the black woman in the dream was Abigail's aunt, and he broke into song again.

It ain't agwine to rain no more;
How in heck can I wash my neck
If it ain't agwine rain no more?
Abigail isn't any more!

Hamilton said he could almost see the cabin where the woman in his dream, her husband, and Abigail had lived, and that he could almost smell the laundry tub. He saw the kitchen. "I have very clean images," he commented. "I can say good-bye to them. I can almost accept separations and losses; but I keep everyone and their memories united, good and bad are united"

[To seminar participants: You can read the total story of Hamilton Edwards' psychoanalysis in this book:

Volkan, V. D. with Fowler, J. C. (2009). *Searching for a Perfect Woman: The Story of a Complete Psychoanalysis*. New York: Jason Aronson.]

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