

Five minutes to three. Just enough time to scope out the waiting room, while not appearing too eager with a super early arrival. “What would a super early arrival be?” I ponder as the buzzer rings me into the space. “A suite and office all to herself, and a private bathroom?! Huh, I wonder if she actually uses it” I mumble while taking a look inside. All pink. Sue Grand’s paper ‘Lies and Body Cruelties in the Analytic Hour’ comes to mind as I take a seat in one of the three empty chairs. I want to be comfortable, I want to take in the awe of the setting but the want does not supersede my anxiety. I straighten out my yellow button-down shirt and adjust my dark brown locs as the door diagonal from me opens. “Hi there, welcome I’m Dr. Rose”. She waves me in and in a semi regressive state I smile with my eyes and shuffle into her office. “Please, have a seat” she says while motioning me to the chair across from hers. The office is enormous with warm rays of sunlight dashing in from the windows. Framed abstract art lines her walls and the six-foot plants in the corners sway with my movement, as though waving hello to me. The purple satin chaise matches her three chairs, and I allow my fingers to run across the delicate material lining the dark engraved wood. “So tell me about yourself” is the last thing I accurately recall her saying during our one hour consultation. At the end of it we share a moment reflecting on Tiger Woods’ recent triumph at the Masters as I’m ushered out, with a second consultation date booked. The sun sparkles against my skin as I step onto the pavement with a whirlwind of emotions stirring in my belly. She was alert, expressive, familiar with a physical similarity to my older cousin Marjory and my goodness, all that purple! Despite the visual opulence of the consultation I’m left feeling hungry, and unsure exactly what will assuage the nagging feeling that I had just committed adultery. The following day I discussed the consultation with my analyst. It was not new news to her, being the main person who encouraged me to apply for psychoanalytic training, without the knowledge that the institutes that accepted me during my first round of interviews would all have a contingency with my acceptance; I’d have to have a training analyst from their institute. All of this occurred while my analyst and I were in the depths of a destructive enactment. My dissociated terror propelling me towards abandoning her as our work together deepened. She listened intently and provided space for my thoughts about the consultation.

A week later, the same exact nagging feeling engulfed me, except it became present while in the waiting room for my second consultation. The door diagonal from me opened slowly and I

reluctantly entered. The purple in Dr. Rose's office intensely popped against the wood engraved furniture, the plants swayed dramatically with every step I took, her framed art appeared larger than I recalled and instead of sunshine bursting in through the windows the sound of rain tapped slowly at the pane. "After our consultation I thought to myself, why are you leaving your analyst outside of the requirement that your training analyst has to be a graduate from an APsaA approved institute?" I responded with three words, with as much control and calmness as I could muster in the moment. We sat staring at each other for an extended period of time. "I'm going to disappoint you, she sounds amazing" whispered Dr. Rose. Her words resonated and as I stared at her Jackson Pollock rendition above her chaise I associated to my older sister, my high school guidance counselor and my college lacrosse coach in succession. Amazing women who, despite their presence, could not fill the shoes of my mother. The consultation was over. A week later she sent me a \$600 bill shortly after I confirmed that I would continue with my analyst and find an alternative institute, one that didn't require me to sacrifice such a transformative relationship.

The dramatics of selecting an institute to attend was a two-year journey, which began with a naïve desire to deepen my therapeutic relationship with individuals who I had been working with for an extended period of time. While obtaining my clinical hours I originally pictured a career of short-term psychotherapy laced with acute symptom reduction, attained goals and insight filled epiphanies from patients; it was like having spaghetti and meatballs with no meatballs, viscerally I knew something crucial was missing. Why weren't my patients moving on? How long would I be working with them? Did she just ask to come in two times a week?! These were questions that circled through my mind on a loop as I yearned for an intellectual community to join, to learn from and to learn with. "Danielle do you think I'd benefit from psychoanalytic training?" I was seeking validation from my analyst though I knew I didn't need it. For months we processed the origins of my motivations, feelings, dreams and expectations associated with becoming a psychoanalyst. I opted to join the one year program at The Stephen Mitchell Relational Study Center while recalibrating my options after hearing the dreaded information that certain institutes required a relational sacrifice. I attended numerous open houses, browsed endlessly on institute webpages and met with a handful of candidates via phone and in person. It was towards the end of my time in the one year program that I threw my hands in the air and opted to start interviewing with other analyst, at the institutes I had already been

accepted to. My analyst was stunned, and despite her commitment towards working with me at no point did she discourage me from seeing what was out there. I was at a crossroad until one institute's name and reputation began emerging through the crowd, as a whisper that turned into a song. It began with a friend of a friend dropping the name. Then a woman I met during my first time attending Division 39, shortly followed by a brief elevator exchange with the institute's board member and finally the co-director at The Stephen Mitchell Relational Study Center put me in touch with a candidate at the institute, who sent an open house invite to my inbox. My destructive enactment was averted, or rather survived by my analyst with a newfound understanding of myself under my belt and an institute to call home.

My first semester in a four year psychoanalytic adult program has been exactly what I hoped for. The realistic expectations that I engrossed myself in processing has allowed me to maximize the networking, instruction, readings and interpersonal aspects of the institute. My enthusiasm has reverberated in the consulting room with patients, in the student lounge with other candidates, and in the conference room while soaking in theory and technique. My own three times a week analysis has served as the catalyst towards me actualizing two three times a week cases in my first year. The broad strokes of topics, and the varied intensity of emotional colors on a never-ending canvas has mounted on an easel laid out by me. I hope to access psychoanalysis as a tool for those patients who dare venture into the depths of the multiplicity within their narratives, with me as a fellow voyager. The added layer of having access to a psychoanalyst of the same race, in which my caseload predominantly mirrors my racial identity being "the cherry on top" of an ineffable experience that has since positively influenced me towards talking to colleagues about engaging in psychoanalytic training.

There is a level of patience, compassion and curiosity flowing through my veins that I am excited to bring into the consulting room. It is my hope to inspire and take part in a transformational relationship with my patients, while recognizing the individuality of those in my private practice and coming to terms with everyone not necessarily being interested in "deep sea diving". In today's social and political climate, having experienced the variety of emotions within various intensities with my psychoanalyst has left its mark on me. In a world that continues to expand towards connecting through technology and a growing decline of undivided attention

during face to face interactions, it is my belief that connecting to another human authentically is not to be taken for granted. I close out this paper with a self-written haiku that echoes why I have engaged in psychoanalytic training:

To love and be loved
All illuminated heights
And the darkest depths