

Books

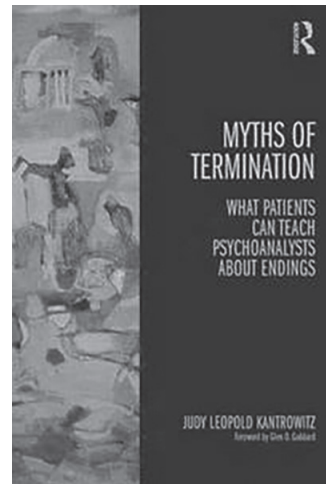
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**Myths of Termination:
What Patients Can Teach Psychoanalysts about Endings**
by Judy Leopold Kantrowitz
New York: Routledge, 2015. 172 pp.

Termination is arguably one of the most diverse and problematic areas to instruct in psychoanalytic institutes, since few candidates have encountered termination of their cases. Even seasoned analysts recount a small number of terminated analysands as the result of the extended length of analytic treatment. Many classic termination references are from 30 to over 70 years old, and while useful, do not address the complexities of how the analytic dyad has changed in contemporary psychoanalysis, or how little we know about termination because of a paucity of systematic studies, and more particularly, how little we know of the analysand's perspective, which is rarely included in the literature. As a seminar leader who has taught termination to candidates for over 20 years, I have become aware of the discrepancies between how we analysts talk about termination and how the process unfolds between us and our analysands. Often not noted, often not said, and often not written is the actual experience of analysands, their words, their feelings, their thoughts.

In his foreword to this slim volume Gabbard notes, "Few of my cases seemed to follow the termination pattern described in the classic articles on the subject. Moreover, I began to realize that little data has been collected on this subject . . . the literature was almost based on anecdotes" (p. xiii). Indeed, much current termination literature focuses on *analysts'*



views, formulations, theories, and conclusions, to the exclusion of analysands' differentiated perspectives. Gabbard has stated that a form of "psychoanalytic mythology" persists in our clinical work and termination where "our theory and our technique are laced with mythic narratives" (Gabbard, 2009, p. 576).

Judy Kantrowitz is owed a debt of gratitude for compiling systematic data from detailed interviews with 82 former analysands (both analysts and non-analysts), which present the reader with a reflective inquiry into psychoanalytic termination and facilitates critical awareness of the received opinion of our analytic predecessors. In this regard, Kantrowitz's work suggests that the "rules" and customary generalizations applied *de rigueur* do not necessarily apply, and that instead several notable aspects of the termination process are revealed, namely, to quote Gabbard again from the Foreword,

very few patients experience the so-called return of symptoms during the termination phase; the majority of analyses discussed in the book ended unilaterally, not by mutual decision; 51 out of 82 of the subjects sought out further help from their analysts after terminating; post-termination contacts have variable results and are not necessarily predictable in their outcome; not everyone internalizes the analyst and continues self-analysis even if they have a positive analytic experience with considerable improvement in their lives . . . intense grief is not necessarily a part of the ending or post termination period; the most frequent complaint involved analysts who stepped outside of their professional role and are unaware of the negative impact such actions had on their patients. . .and some patients cannot experience the full benefit of the analysis until after termination. (p. xiv)

Kantrowitz leads us through thought-provoking discussions of termination covering many of the 200 cited papers and studies on psychoanalytic termination to date. In her chapter, "A Short History of Termination," the author reviews Breuer and Freud's (1895) original work as well as citing Ferenczi, who believed the analysis would exhaust itself. Reich (1950) and Glover (1955) later conceptualized the phase of termination in psychoanalysis. Freud's followers' enthusiasm for the "curative" effects of psychoanalysis comprised an idealized view of therapeutic change, despite Freud's concerns about the interminability of analysis. Kantrowitz moves through 1950s and 1960s with the emphasis on ego psychology and the analysis of defence; subsequent analytic writing in later decades explored unconscious fantasy, oedipality, self-analysis, the capacity for disillusionment, and the de-idealization of the analyst as parts of termination. After the 1970s, appreciation of developmental theory led to termination criteria focused on

intrapsychic and interpersonal issues, separation/individuation, autonomy from drives, increased differentiation of self-and-other representations, the nature and quality of the analytic relationship, aspects of attachment style, and the question of mourning of the analyst as a real or transference object. Kantrowitz closes this chapter exploring idealized assumptions about “total cure” and the increasing awareness of post-termination contact as a natural occurrence, not indicative of therapeutic failure.

In chapter 2, “Developments in the Ending of Psychoanalysis: Insight, Loss, and Mourning,” Kantrowitz writes, “Reports about analytic endings come from the standpoint of being the analyst, not the patient” (p. 24). Here the author describes analysands’ experiences of termination and notes that intense grief is not necessarily part of the ending or post-termination, and that the end phase is not always notably different from the rest of the analysis. Kantrowitz states, “The way an analysis is experienced, assimilated, and represented is likely to change with time and the analysand’s later life experience” (p. 55). In chapter 3, “Non-Mutual Endings,” the author details complications to endings that deviate from the accepted “norm” of mutually agreed terminations. Knowing that the majority of analyses ended unilaterally, Kantrowitz offers a caveat:

Analysts must remain acutely attuned to their analysands’ reactions to ending . . . they must be mindful of their own countertransference and other personal feelings that may lead them to hold on too long or too tightly or, alternatively, to let the analysands go too quickly without adequate exploration of the meaning of the ending. (p. 79)

In chapter 4, “The Effect of Post-Termination Contact,” Kantrowitz offers an up-to-date review and discussion of post-analytic contact, pointing out that returning to one’s analyst after termination, as other authors have demonstrated, may foster continued analytic growth. On the other hand, while “co-teaching by former analytic pairs seems to be normative in certain analytic institutes” (p. 104), Kantrowitz cautions three paragraphs later that “we must always remember that we remain their analysts in their minds” (*ibid.*). Kantrowitz’s findings suggest that “social or professional contact sometimes seemed to disrupt an idealization, opening up negative feelings that might not have been adequately dealt with in the treatment” (p. 105). Towards the end of this chapter she adds the caveat, “It is my belief that the analysand, not the analyst, should initiate post-analytic contact, and that following the analysand’s lead is the wisest course” (*ibid.*). In chapter 5, “As Time Goes By: Ways of Keeping Analysis Alive,” Kantrowitz, tackles the enigmatic issue of self-analysis. She states,

“The capacity to be self-reflective about our inner life—having perspective on the meaning of our thoughts, feelings, fantasies, and actions—is both a goal of analysis and a criterion for its termination” (p. 106). But what precisely is a self-analytic function? Is it having a reflective discussion with oneself? Is it hearing the analyst’s voice in oneself? Despite the use of self-analysis, how *accurately* does one interpret one’s inner life? Kantrowitz provides excerpts from analysands recalling self-analytic work and she leaves the reader to decide.

Kantrowitz’s final chapters, chapter 6, “Afterwards, What We Learn,” and chapter 7, “Reflections and Reconsiderations,” raise more questions. Citing Novick (1982), the author suggests analysands may achieve and maintain positive results without developing a self-analytic function; however, if this is so, how do we understand what sustains positive psychic and relational functioning? Do intrinsic factors derived from the analytic relationship create an effect of greater magnitude on analytic outcome than the subsequent developmental factors facilitated by the analysis and that are involved in the analysand’s relation to self and interaction with his outside world? More questions.

Dr. Kantrowitz does not discuss the issue of premature termination, that has been found to be significant for both psychoanalytic candidates and their analysands. In one study (Frayn, 1995), 24 per cent of all control cases terminated prematurely. Continued exploration of premature termination might add important information about sudden unilateral patient termination, its impact on both the patient and the candidate-analyst, and the factors that contribute to this unsettling yet common experience. Kantrowitz’s brief excerpts from numerous psychoanalytic analysands, while of much interest, require close reading and at times proved difficult to systematize and categorize. One minor criticism of this volume is that unfortunately an eminent training analyst’s name is misspelled (Bacal).

Perhaps there is an inherent paradox in our profession—integrating nomothetic and idiographic data. Does one expect further systematic studies on termination and psychoanalytic outcome will yield substantial conclusions to serve as a set of rules to guide us in our psychoanalytic work? Do we find ourselves seeking an ideal for therapeutic endeavours rather than face the diverse complexity of psychoanalysis? Kantrowitz in her introduction cites many well-known analysts “who have tried to warn us about idealized, unrealistic expectations from analysis . . . They point out that internal struggles remain in all of us, analysed or not, throughout our lives” (p. 1).

Dr. Kantrowitz’s text, *Myths of Termination* deserves to be required reading for psychoanalysts and psychotherapy researchers interested in

termination. It should be placed on the same bookshelf beside Wallerstein's *Forty-Two Lives in Treatment* (1986) and Firestein's *Termination in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy* (2001).

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Lacan: The Unconscious Reinvented

by Colette Soler, translated by Esther Faye and Susan Schwartz
Library Series of the Centre for Freudian Analysis and Research
London: Karnac Books, 2014, 246 pp.

This book is a *tour de force majeur*. It must be one of the finest on this topic in English, serving at least three functions. It provides a very detailed, remarkably clear account of the evolution of many aspects of Lacan's theory; it is reliable enough in its precision and scope to satisfy the North American scientifically trained clinician; and in its selection of topics, it covers the theoretical ground necessary for the evolution of Lacanian clinical practice as it is applied to an ever-widening variety of patients by an expanding group of analysts and therapists.

Lacan: The Unconscious Reinvented demonstrates profoundly the result of Colette Soler's intensive study and practice of Lacan's work over a long period of time. In it, she “takes up, orders, and problematises some of my contributions from over the last ten years. They are all linked to my seminars held during this time in the School of Psychoanalysis of the Forums