

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

Dialectics of Mortality and Immortality:
Time as an Internal and Transitional Object Experience
and
Time as a Persecutory vs. a Holding Object

Susan Kavaler-Adler

(Originally published in:

ISSUES IN PSYCHOANALYTIC PSYCHOLOGY, 35(1), 37-61.)

Republished here with the permission of the Editors of *Issues In Psychoanalytic Psychology*.

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

Abstract

D. W. Winnicott spoke to the psychoanalytic world about “space” and this article speaks about “time.” How do we experience time through the projection of internal persecutory versus internal holding objects onto the phenomena of Time? How do we do time management from the inside out?

In a multitude of clinical illustrations and Argentine tango parallel associations to the clinical paradigm, this article demonstrates the vicissitudes of time in the psychic ambience of developmental trauma and intrapsychic conflict related issues. From the transitional phase “tissue mask” to the analyst’s breathing, to the infant splitting off from himself in a high chair, and to the projective identification of the split off metallic breast part-object mother, this article explores “time as an object” evolving from a persecutory demon (or “demon lover”) to a holding maternal embrace, until we finally realize the true organic flow of the mind-body dance of Argentine tango. Then we can surrender and close our eyes, both on the couch and in the arms of our partners in the Argentine tango; in both, it “takes two to tango” and the “two” itself is in part the dialectic of the continuum of space/time, body/mind, and transference/countertransference.

In the clinical examples, we will see the gentleman with the big watch who cannot surrender to the time management of the analyst, versus the man who asks for the blinds to be drawn and the clocks to all be turned, so he can fully surrender to his unconscious through trusting the time management of the female psychoanalyst. We also see the role of mourning as a developmental process (Kavaler-Adler’s theory of “developmental mourning”). We see how surrendering to the flow of time is related to the psychic digestion of the mourning process, where the symbolization of object experience is achieved through the affects and related psychic dialectic of mourning. As patients’ surrender to the “containing” and “holding” environment aspects of the clinical situation, we allow *time* to flow through a surrender to affect. The persecutory aura of *time* is thus diminished. Consequently, our fear of entrapment within the confines of linear time transforms. Our fear of deadlines, which at first have appeared as persecutory, opens up into the “eternal now” moment of connection within the embrace of time as matured through mourning.

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

Thus our mortality is punctuated by pivotal moments of immortality that transform our entire perception of deadlines, mortality, and of time itself. The opposite is the polarized oppositions to relatedness seen in the patient who must try to “kill time” since time is already felt as a persecutor who has killed the patient. Re-enacting trauma, rather than mourning its losses, is a perpetual “killing” of Time.

Keywords: time as an internal object; persecutory time, holding time, time as transitional object, transitional object, holding object, "eternal now" feeling, demon-lover complex, developmental mourning.

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

I wake up with time as persecutory, and by evening I experience time as holding. Time changes as my state of mind changes. I have wondered how this is for others and for my patients.

When you're "in the zone" in Argentine Tango, the dance that's all about connection, it is like the infinite "eternal now" moment. Time is felt as organic and unfolding as the embrace with my partner and my connection with my inner self, my partner, and the music, - all help me flow fully into the moment.

The same is true in psychoanalysis, when I can be open to the flow of my patient's unconscious, and the flow of spontaneous feeling, I can be fully "in the zone" of the "eternal now" moment. When I'm a follower in Argentine Tango, I need to be free of anticipation. Whatever steps I know must be in the background of my consciousness as I dance, so that I don't anticipate the lead, and my technique must fully be a part of me so that it can be in the organic flow of the dance. So too as a psychoanalyst, I need to have all my theoretical knowledge in the preconscious background dimensions of my mind, while I am free to focus fully on receiving the "lead" from the unconscious of my patient, turning my unconscious as an organ to the unconscious of the patient, as Freud spoke of in his comments on "free floating attention" in the analyst. I become merged at one level with the unconscious of the patient, while I observe both the patient's behavior and my inner feeling experience of the patient. I surrender to a state of mind akin to Wilfred Bion's "Without Memory or Desire," (Bion, 19) or Winnicott's free spontaneous play state unfolding in potential space (Winnicott, 1971). It is in this pregnant moment that I am freed temporarily from linear time, and from all its persecutory demands that might impinge on me at any other time. The free flow of time allows a dialectic of feminine and masculine energies within the self.

By contrast, the persecution experience of linear time results when there are addictive attachments to old impinging internal objects, tied in with blocked affects and blocked mourning

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

and grief. Once a holding mother is internalized – either in infancy, or later in the therapeutic environment with an analyst – the individual can experience a sense of being held by time. Then one can surrender to a feeling state of “having all the time in the world,” and can allow the internal world creative process to flow. However, for this to happen, the mothering person must be an adequate mother of separation as well, and must be internalized as such. Without such internalization of a mother that sustains contact and connection through the time of separation, when one moves away towards autonomy alternate with moves back towards the mother, the psychological experience of “holding” is continually disrupted and one becomes impinged on by linear time limits, as the in term “deadline,” as in making one dead (see Chopra, 1993). Linear time can turn into persecutory deadlines and into the deadline of mortality. However, if an adequate mother of separation has been internalized, one can let go and surrender to the autonomy of the other and to the autonomy of one’s own self, back and forth, in interpenetrating alternation. During the separation-individuation period, the limits of time can become boundaries to center, support, and embrace us, as a secure Argentine Tango embrace that provides a holding frame for each of the two tango partners.

In Phillip, a psychoanalytic patient, or analysand (see Kavaler-Adler, 2003a), I could experience both the flow of time and its dialectic between mortality and immortality. Phillip experienced himself as grieving for seven generations of ancestors, and in doing so he opened himself to memories of losses, not only from this life, but from past lives as well. Phillip suffered from the devastating loss in an earlier life of a wife and child at the age of 30 that made him shut down his “heart center,” as he called it, promoting a terror of commitment to love in this life. As Phillip opened his heart again through a mourning process that took him deep into the interior of his heart’s injuries through loss of those he loved over years, decades, and maybe even centuries, he dramatically increased his capacities to open to love and its commitments. In this life, after a divorce, he re-married, to a wife with whom he could share his deepest emotional, erotic, creative, and spiritual capacities. He had two children with her that he dearly loved, nurtured and supported. Phillip used his creative talents as a writer and editor to become successful in the corporate world, but then studied to be an energy healer in many years of intensive workshops that allowed him to leave the corporate world and to fully commit to healing others, and to writing about the process behind his healing work. During all this vital life

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

evolution, which transpired as he worked through many levels of losses and the unexpressed longings related to those losses, Phillip managed to make a full commitment to the time limited sphere of his mortality. This is seen particularly in his strivings to increasingly commit to monogamy in marriage. Such commitment had been a challenging struggle for him for most of his adult life. Nevertheless, in committing fully to engagement in the linear time sphere of his mortality, Phillip also transcended his mortality. One sign of this was his meditation practice, in which he experienced himself as merging with an immortal spiritual entity that he encountered as Jesus Christ, which was perhaps also his own true self in spiritual form. Another sign of this was the creative flow of his literary and philosophical writings, which began to win much acclaim, and which had their own spiritual dimensions.

Through all this Phillip became a living Testament to the basic human dialectic and discourse between mortality and immortality. In fact, at the point when he was overcome with the grief of his mother's death, he demonstrated the poignant dual consciousness of pain over his mother's burial as a body of flesh, and the simultaneous awareness of his mother's transcendence into a spiritual state from which she could be born again as another person. He sobbed out his grief not only about the literal loss of her as the person she was in the body she had in this life, but also the grief of anticipating his own like demise. Yet, simultaneously, he knew of his arrival and transcendence into other lives. This allowed him to express awareness of his deceased father's communications with him as a spiritual being, a spiritual being who could now see how he had defended against the very closeness to his son that he craved. Being in touch with these spiritual dimensions and his father's spirit, as well as feeling the holding environment in therapy with me, Phillip could fully surrender to the agonies of his grief, full of the sadness of both love and loss, while at the same time being able to feel potential, to feel all the enriching potentials of his life. Phillip experienced these possibilities both through his children, and through his consciousness of his own spiritual transformations. In addition, he experienced his ancestors psychically urging him to mourn, for he felt they were wanting him to grieve the losses and pain of their lives as well as of his own life. Phillip expressed all this in our analytic therapy sessions, and as he did so I could feel the dialectic between time as linear and restrictive (potentially persecutory) and time as holding and phenomenologically eternal. Experiencing him through listening, I could feel the permeability of all boundaries, transcending barriers and deadlines, and

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

opening into the universe of the potential space that D. W. Winnicott first found in terms of transitional space (Winnicott, 1971). I could feel and hear the rhythm of the dialectic between mortality and immortality.

In a vignette of another patient, a man who I will call Leonard, I found a contrast to Phillip. I would die without having fully lived. He enacted a statement of a life lived in a “false self,” through his mind, without his interior world being free to emotionally connect with others. Leonard dreamed of a young woman rejecting him because of his age. He was shocked in the dream to realize he was no longer young. Leonard found himself in the collision of the illusion of infinite youth and the cruel reality of mortality. But as he entered psychoanalysis, he found it was not mortality that actually kept him imprisoned and trapped – a condition which he could easily project onto the perimeters of his analytic treatment – but rather it was the defensive encasement of his false self that made him distance himself emotionally from others on a perpetual basis, which truly kept him imprisoned. His potential true self had infantile and child feelings that terrified him. His rage threatened to annihilate his beginning mourning process, and so he had to risk bringing it into treatment. He had to face his rage to face all the other feelings that needed to flow through him to allow a spontaneous true self flow of life. Otherwise, mortality threatened to be a deadline like that imagined by Emily Dickinson in her poetry about an abyss or an alabaster tomb (see Kavaler-Adler, 1993, 2000, study of Emily Dickinson). If Leonard could free himself of his fears of retaliation from the analyst, as I as the analyst interpreted it, - he could then face his rage head on, a rage that was ultimately a rage at time itself, which the analyst can come to represent. If he could face his rage at time, then his rage did not have to remain “too much,” as his entire life started to feel to him.. Then Leonard could welcome the sadness that he had already begun to touch on. This would allow him the object relations connection to the analyst that he needed to internalize and to sustain, in order to create an internal container for the full affective flow of life that he will need to engage with to be fully alive before he dies. Tolerating rage and then the loss related to all he wished for, that he never had in a human and self-connection, could allow Leonard to begin to participate in the renewal of life in the moment, the moment of time that can be pregnant with potential, and which can then allow a sense of the infinite within the security of the internal holding other. Real love and connection comes as rage becomes symbolized, intentionally directed, and then navigated in

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

symbolic communication, so that the grief of sadness can be fully surrendered to. Only then can love and connection be renewed, so that a true self can evolve through spontaneous expressions, moment by moment--not in the agendas of linear time, where we are inhibited by the constricting consciousness of knowing of our own mortality.

Hate blocks the flow of time. In an emotional state of hate, time is persecutory in its internal object persona, and is not holding. However, if hate can be understood and symbolized in relation to the other towards whom it is felt, hate can be contained and tolerated. Then "time" can be transformed into a holding object, where a continuous flow of experience allows for the sense of unbounded time, or a feeling sense of "having all the time in the world." Without containing and symbolizing hate time is disrupted.

Without the symbolic communication of hate, hate becomes a frozen persecutory object or Melanie Klein's fantasized persecutory breast. I believe that Melanie Klein intuited, perhaps better than anyone that hate must be brought to a symbolic level where it can be understood as object related fantasies. Otherwise, hate becomes a major unconscious or dissociated obstacle that can take on the part object paranoia of time as a persecutor. Winnicott, likewise, knew that our internal states of hate must be negotiated, although he saw hate as prompted more by failures and traumas in mothering than hate as prompted by innate factors. Still, Winnicott did believe in innate rage. Melanie Klein highlighted innate possibilities for hate, but she also wrote of hate, as well as its related paranoia, as being reactive to a mother's failure to receive reparative gestures from her child, since in this way the mother turned persecutory rather than being the warm holding breast object (Klein, 1957). Following Klein and Winnicott, I am fleshing out these theories and extending them. My theory of "developmental mourning" (Kavaler-Adler, 1992, 1993a, 1993b, 1995, 1996, 2000a, 2000b, 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2007, 2010, 2013) speaks to the feeling process that engages all the most difficult feelings of rage, pain, longing, loss, and the sadness of grief that combines with love. It is through clearing the way for this free flowing affective process that we become, with each process of mourning, more and more our true selves, with internal holding objects inside of us. We become true selves who can then tolerate the flow of time, rather than being continually deadened by the persecutory threat of deadlines.

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

All this relates to Melanie Klein's understanding of how mourning is a critical developmental and clinical process (Klein, 1940), and to Winnicott's understanding that we "use" our objects. In understanding how we "use" our objects of attachment, in D. W. Winnicott's sense (Winnicott, 1969), we can come to experience how we can "use" time rather than feeling controlled, imprisoned, or intimidated by time. Mourning as a developmental process, and the "use of an object," as well as the use of the specific object of time, all interact. The capacity to mourn, cited by Klein and myself in our clinical theory, is intimately related to the capacity for intimacy, since loss must be tolerated to endure disappointment and conflict within a sustained relationship. We can look further, however, to how the capacity to mourn is intimately related to our capacity to feel time as opposed to "telling time" or "watching time."

Time becomes persecutory when the ability to be in the moment, and the ability to put all the moments together, breaks down. Time is holding as long as the "eternal now" moment can be negotiated with the limits of linear time, as in a psychoanalytic session or a three minute tango. How analytic patients negotiate the time in a session becomes pertinent here to view how time is created from within the person as either persecutory or holding, just as the analyst as a transference object takes on either perspective in any given session.

In the case of Larry I encountered a man who would kill time in his life and in a session. His awareness of time was hyper-vigilant, and he lacked any trust that the analyst could tell the time in the session for him. To trust the analyst to keep the time in the session would have meant surrendering to the other, rather than trying to be in control in the session and trying to control time in the session. In fact, Larry wore a very large watch, and would watch the time in the session by watching his watch.

This highly contrasted with another patient, Robert, who would make sure that a certain clock was turned away from his view as he lay on the couch for fear that he would be too conscious of time, and would thus not be able to fully surrender to his feelings and to his unconscious associations in the session. For Robert, in contrast to Larry, the analyst was the one to trust so that he could surrender to suspended time in the session, allowing himself to experience the tranquil state of believing one has "all the time in the world," so as to fully sink into his feelings during the session. In contrast to Larry, Robert would have the unbounded time

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

feeling that comes with sensing the immortality of the fully lived moment, often called the “eternal now,” as opposed to the time bound feeling of “not enough time” or of denying time by “killing time,” both of which were related to the hyper vigilant, big watch, approach to a session shown by Larry.

June and the Tissue Mask on the Couch

Jorge Torres, a Master or Maestro of Argentine Tango, formerly in the Broadway show “Forever Tango,” speaks of his experience as a leader in tango in a documentary film, directed by Marcia Rock, called “Surrender Tango,” (Rock, 200 , 2010) named after an article of mine on the “Anatomy of Surrender” (Kavaler-Adler 2001). He speaks of seeing his female partner, the follower, with his “skin” rather than with his eyes, just as one might in the act of making love. Those of us who dance Argentine Tango know just what he means. This state of experience, however, is equally applicable to the patient on the couch in psychoanalysis, who is only on the couch if she or he can surrender to seeing the analyst through her or his mind as it is experienced in one’s body while lying on the couch, as opposed to a therapy patient who sits up and sees the analyst with her eyes.

What effect does the relinquishing of the head control, which accompanies observing the other through the eyes, have on one’s sense of time, and thus on one’s capacity to surrender to time as well as to the overall analytic situation? For a period of time in June’s analysis, she would come into her analytic sessions, 3 to 5 times a week, and put a tissue over her eyes before she lay on the couch. This went on for a year or more, until she naturally relinquished this “tissue mask” as easily and naturally as any child in Winnicott’s transitional stage of development who relinquishes his or her teddy bear or blanket as the transitional object is no longer developmentally needed. What June did during this period was to extend the state of time’s suspension as she lay on the couch. With the tissue over her eyes June was able to experience a feeling of being free from any judgments of her on the analyst’s part, which would relate to her own projected judgments. This was never interpreted by me, the analyst, since it was a transitional object experience that needed to take its own developmental course. However,

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

in retrospect I would like to interpret it for the sake of viewing the experience of time on the analyst's couch. I would now say that the illusion of being free of shame, because one feels free of being observed by someone who reflects the analysand's own projected judgments, when wearing the tissue mask, allows the time suspension that might not yet be accessible to the patient until later stages of separation and self-integration took place. Robert was able to suspend time by just turning the clock away so he could not see it. During the transitional time of beginning separation-individuation in June's treatment, however, June was not yet fully able to feel free to surrender her sense of observing time, unless she could feel she was shielded from the analyst's imagined impinging judgments. Using the magical thinking of the transitional stage, where transitional objects are treated as live beings who are yet controlled like puppets for the developing self's psychological needs, June was able to "magically" produce the illusion that she was in a world totally of her own making, although the analyst could be there as an extension of herself through being a witness, rather than a judge or an interpreter. June seemed to use the prop of the tissue over her face to create this magical, transitional stage, illusion. Nevertheless, when June was developmentally ready she surrendered the use of the tissue and unmasked herself, thus becoming freer to be vulnerable to the view of the analyst as she was more able to own her own judgments of herself. Through the same process, June became less condemning and shame inducing in these judgments of herself, as she faced the internal world fantasies of her guilt ridden and shame ridden self squarely in the face, while on the couch, with her face covered.

It is interesting to note that during this transitional stage in June's analysis, with the transitional object usage (Winnicott, 1971) of the tissue mask she created the illusion that was necessary to allow her to experience time as holding, so that her feelings could flow through her in the session. Robert, by contrast, had already internalized the experience of time being "holding," of "having all the time in the world," when he first hit the couch in his second analysis.

Woman Closing Her Eyes in Argentinean Tango

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

Just as a psychoanalytic patient can create the experience of being held by time, due to an internalized holding mother being securely within the psyche of the patient, so too the female follower in the lead and follow partnership of Argentine Tango may choose to close her eyes while dancing, especially when dancing in a close – as opposed to open – embrace. When a woman closes her eyes during a three minute tango, she can create the internal illusion of suspended time, each moment being felt as eternal in the depth of presence in the connection of tango. Time becomes holding as the woman is held and holds in the embrace. The woman then feels the simultaneous connection with herself, her partner, and the music. As a woman is held in the external embrace, she creates the experience of time being holding. Also, as she closes her eyes, she can feel the internal sense of being held by her internal objects, which were first internalized and created in her infancy with a holding mother, and then hopefully with a holding father as well. This is all part of time being suspended in its linear dimensions, so that time does not impinge with persecutory demands but rather becomes a flow of holding energy, which is enveloped and enveloping in relation to the tango music. Of course, if the male lead pushes or pulls her with his arms, rather than allowing her to organically flow as he guides her with his upper body movements and weight changes on the floor, the female follower will experience time as disrupted, as her space is disrupted. Or, if the internal world of the woman intrudes with obsessions in her mind or preoccupations that distract her from just being in her feelings to follow the flow of the music and the flow of the man leading her, then time is aborted in its holding aspects and becomes too impinging or persecutory.

Defensive Illusions versus Developmentally Enhancing Illusions Related to Dealing with Time

When Ellen was young and first began therapy, she had a Peter Pan fantasy about herself that served highly defensive purposes. Through the fantasy that she was a Peter Pan character who would stay young forever and live forever, she denied time, and held off saying “yes” to a man proposing marriage to her, who she had been dating for ten years. Then, when she was already in her thirties and her boyfriend left her, just at the point where therapy had helped her say she could get married, Ellen felt like time became a sledge hammer of torture, reminding her always that she was imprisoned in her increasing age each year as her biological limits

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

persecuted her. Ellen's denial of time through the Peter Pan illusion was harshly challenged as she aged and found that men eluded her as her biological limits were reaching their limits. Ellen's sealed off in a bubble mind state collapsed as she was confronted, not only with her boyfriend leaving, but with her boyfriend marrying a younger woman and having children soon after. Once her bubble of the time denial had burst, Ellen went into increasing despair. Her black and white thinking kept her in this despair as she looked incessantly, for years, on internet dating services for a replacement for her lost boyfriend, who now represented the perfect life she would have had with him that she could no longer have. Trapped also in her very concrete demands for the right physical appearance of the man, who she hoped would ignite the sexual chemistry that would launch her into a more fulfilled life, Ellen searched for years in vain for the right man. Despite possessing very high intelligence and considerable professional success—although this too was limited by her incessant search for the man who would transform her life—Ellen remained largely black and white and concrete in her thinking. This was true to such a degree that time became increasingly persecutory in its very real limits related to finding a man to marry and have children with. When Ellen decided that one man after another who were available to her were losers—which confirmed her view that those men who weren't losers would only go out with younger women who could more possibly offer them children—she herself, remaining without a husband and her own family, became the caricatured loser in her mind. In fact, as time increasingly impinged and became intolerably persecutory, she began to see herself increasingly in terms of the mocking caricature name that students had called her abusively in Junior High School. She would now speak of herself as this “Mumbo Jumbo” figure. This “mumbo Jumbo” name had once filled Ellen with so much shame that she had cringed with terror when anyone applying that term to her would be near her. Poignantly, she also had hid her shame ridden secret from her parents so there was nobody to comfort her and help her heal the pain and lessen the shame. Instead, as she got older and time impinged more on her dating situation in a persecutory way, she began to identify with the bullies of her Junior High School years and began to see herself as the “Mumbo Jumbo” mocked clown. She would then project this self-made stereotype of the “loser” onto the men she would meet. Then, Ellen would feel repelled by the men who she so caricatured as the images she created of them mirrored back to her own shame. Ellen endlessly searched for the man who would transcend all

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

this by being some super father figure ideal god figure. Only by being affiliated with such an idealized god figure, who she saw very much in concrete physical terms, did she believe she could compensate for her shame ridden, flawed, and inadequate self-image.

Although Ellen could speak of dreams and fantasies in her sessions, all such mental activity was foreclosed by her black and white concrete view of things. After this earlier time, Ellen seemed impaired in her ability to use her imagination to enhance the men who might actually be emotionally available in her life. She kept searching for the right physical façade and physique, and yet her projections of her own “Mumbo Jumbo” shame image distorted the most handsome of male characters. The analyst interpreted all this as Ellen projected her shame ridden images of idiocy, ugliness, or craziness onto herself, but also into the analyst. So ultimately this was a way out. Still, Ellen’s concrete mind kept her locked in the belief that whatever might be going on in her head—whatever her own interpretation of things were, and despite the analyst’s attempts to interpret her own interpreting activity that reduced everything to concrete terms—the problem was out there, in the poor quality of all the men that might be available to her. All this made me think, as Ellen’s analyst, that Ellen was trapped in the left side of her brain. She seemed unable to have a free dialectic between the left side of her brain, which perceived the linear nature of time, and a right brain that could see beyond this linear time to the time of holding that could be born anew each second, allowing a full present experience in the moment. Without contact and connection to her right brain function, and without a dialectic between the limits of time seen by the linear left brain and the expansion of time through the flow of time as unbounded and continually pregnant with the new moment, Ellen remained trapped in the confines of the perceptions of her left brain. She could not get free by seeing how her interpretation of things was entrapping and killing her. She persisted in interpreting life as only having meaning if she were to be young again and meet the right professional man, and have children with him. As Ellen held on to her limited concrete goals—that to her would create the only meaning in life—she began to build up so much pain and frustration that her psychological entrapment began to be expressed in physical forms, such as in back pain, pain so severe that she needed physical operations. Just as her mind was trapped in her concrete thinking, which included seeing time as only linear and threatening in its limits, so too was she

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

feeling trapped in a concrete body that often exploded in asthmatic attacks rather than breathing freely.

For Ellen time had become the enemy, not her own way of interpreting and living her life. She cursed her increasing age and blamed all her romantic losses and disappointments on her age. Ultimately she externalized all blame for her fate on the image of time, time as the persecutor that chased her in her nightmares, threatening to eradicate all life in her through drowning, assaultive attack, or entrapment in confined spaces. She feared drowning in her mother's womb or in her own waves of uncried tears. In her psychotherapy, Ellen saw herself as a victim trapped in the years of treatment, rather than as an active agent in an analytic process. When there was any opening of this state of mind, so that she could see herself as having some slightly increased sense of agency, as began to appear in her dreams, of hope, of possibility, of an opening up of time's victimizing triumph over her.

However, gradually, through "developmental mourning process," (Kavaler-Adler, 1992 through 2013), in which rage and grief could be expressed, Ellen was able to connect more - through her right brain, - and then became receptive enough to have a man in her life. A critical part of this process was how her rage became expressed in the transference. Ellen began to experience a wish to stab the analyst with a knife, when I, as her analyst, interpreted some dream images. Ellen reported a dream where "someone came around to all these people in a circle to cut our throats and to pour poison in my ear." I interpreted Ellen's feeling that others, such as I and her sister-in-law, were pouring poison in her ear in the way we spoke about her. I said that she felt like we were cutting her throat by making her rage act up in her throat, where she had severe asthmatic reactions. I told her that I thought she wanted to take a knife, like the projected other in the dream did, and cut into me in my throat, to stop my interpretations that felt like they were penetrating into her. She screamed out in response, from the couch, "Yes I do! I want to knife you!"

As Ellen's aggression thus became free to be expressed in the transference, and also in parallel, in relation to others in her family, she began to speak up to people and have a full voice. Her back problems decreased as did her other visceral and somatic ways of turning her rage and anger against herself. Then she could more fully surrender to the grief she felt about losses in

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

her life. This opened her to allowing an emotionally available man into her life, and allowed her to face the realities of this relationship. This, in turn, allowed Ellen to sustain the relationship despite the many disillusionments she painfully grieved, along with her now conscious rage, about being older and her choices thus being more limited. Ellen began to accept time, and thus to accept reality. Gradually, she lessened her internal persecutory object projection onto time. Occasionally now, time could become holding for Ellen. She could soften and smile more, and voice her anger more, rather than turning it in against herself.

Pete, Similar to Ellen

A similar defensive denial of time is seen in the case of Pete, who would kill time in his life and in his sessions because he feared that life would kill him. Just like the Peter Pan illusion that served to deny time for Ellen until she imagined it might become too late for her to say yes to marriage, which became the ultimate meaning in her mind for a fulfilled life as she aged, in the case of Pete the defensive illusion that denied time and turned time persecutory was the illusion that he could begin everything over and become a totally new and ideal person if he could just geographically escape from his analytic treatment and from New York, and could find some tranquil haven in another geographic location, where he would start his life anew. Pete clung to this illusion with increasing intensity with each disappointment in his life, which made him feel he had to defend against seeing himself as a loser who was missing out on the essential relationships of life, particularly in relation to becoming a husband and father, but also in terms of finding work that would be recognized as meaningful by others in the world.

The way that Pete operated in his analytic sessions belied the fallacies related to the way he lived and viewed his life. In each session, as Pete relinquished an early idealizing symbiotic position with the analyst, and entered the developmental domain of being a separate being who needed to interact to have a relationship, Pete would defy his need for relationship and for the internalizations that could come from such relatedness with the analyst, and with his feminine and masculine sides of his own personality, by opposing receptive listening or interaction with the analyst through constant polarizing statements. Only as the session neared its linear end

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

would Pete partially surrender to interaction through some meaningful dialogue and conversation. The dueling opposition that Pete set up would only transform into a meaningful dance of conversation for a few unconsciously controlled and contrived moments. Then Pete would immediately bolt out the door. For a few moments, time would be holding and not persecutory, but the abortion of conversation would triumph with his escape through the limits of the linear session time ending. This, however, did gradually change with treatment so that a more full conversation could be had with the sessions, and the yielding surrender to the holding analyst, and thus the holding quality of time opened up, following the expression of rage about his sense of entrapment. Pete's cycles of rage and grief, and the analyst's interpretations of these cycles and of his associated memories, became part of his mourning process. Gradually Pete's distancing through polarized enactments was modified, and with more relatedness and dialogue time became less persecutory. Pete met a woman and sustained the relationship until he could marry, despite a lifetime of sadomasochistic enactments.

The Highchair Metaphor in Harold

Harold re-lived an infant experience in his therapy that illustrates how a trauma related to time can turn time persecutory for life, until the trauma is re-experienced and repeatedly felt and mourned in object relations psychoanalytic psychotherapy. The experience that Harold re-lived in each session, which ultimately became a conscious memory that could be symbolized and mourned, was of having been trapped in a high chair when still an infant. A female patient had had a similar early memory that contributed to her fears of being trapped, but for Harold the infant experience became an intolerable trauma that arrested his whole life and made time a continually persecutory figure in his psychic fantasies. When Harold was an infant, not yet able to walk, his mother left him in a high chair. His mother then failed to return for such a long time that Harold--starving for his mother to look at him and give him the recognition and validation that he needed to exist—mentally split off from himself, and saw himself across the room looking back at him. At this point Harold had totally dissociated from himself, and such splitting and dissociation would become a repeated experience, as he would sometimes confuse the other he was with and a projected part of himself. Most of all, however, Harold would come to

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

experience time as a persecutory force, and in his attempts to “kill time” or deny time he would then end up self sabotaging himself by making time his enemy. He would lose out on many opportunities in his life that he became too late for. However, as he re-lived the early experience of being trapped in a high chair in treatment, and as he realized how he was projecting this entrapment onto the therapy situation so that what could be a holding environment became a prison in his mind, he began to face the internal feeling states that he could never get rid of, because he had perpetually dissociated from the traumatic overwhelming feelings that he could not feel on his own. As he began to face these feelings in treatment, Harold was for the first time able to significantly move ahead in his life and commit himself to a love relationship. Simultaneously, he also committed to more sustained work in his form of creativity. But the conflict of time as persecutory versus time as holding became intensely felt and highlighted as a torment in his mind whenever he had to decide to risk any form of commitment. Although for the moment, time could transform from a persecutor into a holding mother in his mind, when he could tolerate feeling the feelings in the room with the analyst that he could not tolerate on his own for his whole life, Harold would repeatedly regress back to experiencing time as persecutory. He would regress with each new awareness of the limits of linear time that would remind him of his mortality. Nevertheless, in sharing this struggle he began to make headway.

Projective Identification and Time

With the disruption of the dialectic between mother and infant, mother and child, and father and child during one’s early years, intersubjectivity and interpersonal relatedness break down and result in continual coercive enactments against the other, who is in the room with the developmentally disrupted person. When the other enacted upon in this way is a trained object relations psychotherapist, we often speak of the “projective identification” that is taking place. Where there might have been intersubjectivity and dialogue, there is only the split off part of the patient that is being affectively pushed into the therapist’s realm of experience, as the patient tries to avoid experiencing the part of him or herself that carries the sadomasochistic trauma of his disrupted relations in his earliest life, before a separate and integrated self could be formed

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

within the person. How is the experience of time affected in both the patient and the therapist when a coercive enactment through projective identification is taking place?

An example of projective identification that prevented the flow of time from happening naturally was when Harold would speak in with a disowned sadistic form of aggressive intrusion. At these times Harold would not allow any room for the analyst to speak throughout most of the session. Harold would lecture, and then when the analyst tried to intercede to make a point Harold would experience the analyst as dominating him with lecturing, which related to a father transference.

This reminded me as the analyst of a female patient, Ms. Z. (Kavaler-Adler, 1998), who I treated many years ago. Ms. Z. would speak also with a disowned aggression that felt to the analyst like a forceful intrusion of some sadomasochistic enactment that Ms. Z. was repeating from the past, perhaps from the time of infancy when her mother had impinged on her rather than holding and responding in an attuned way to her. Ms. Z. had seemed to identify with the impinging and rigidly controlling mother she had had, who was unavailable on a feeling level as she performed functions perfunctorily on her infant. Then when in the room with her analyst, Ms. Z. would automatically repeat the mother's dominance, not letting in anything the analyst would say, not allowing herself to open to receiving anything the analyst attempted to say when attempting to address Ms. Z.'s states of frustration, rage, and sealed off barricading of contact. When I, as the analyst, failed to alert Ms. Z. to her barricaded state that prevented contact, connection, and conversation, I would often speak louder to get through to her. Ms. Z. then reacted to this behavior on my part, which seemed to reenact the mother's forceful intrusions. Then as I was provoked into trying to get through to her as she barricaded herself against me, she experienced my speaking to her (when words were not yet containers of symbolic meaning, "just words") as an aggressive assault that inspired her to call me "the battering ram."

Ms. Z. had a dream at this time in which she was in the role of the mother who was holding an infant in such an intrusive way that she was jamming her breast into the infant, and the breast was in fact a metallic breast that she jammed so forcibly into the infant that the infant was killed. Ironically, in the projective identification in the room with the analyst, Ms. Z. was re-living something of the original mother/infant state that had become a primal psychic fantasy blueprint

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

in her unconscious, and in her analytic sessions she was forcing the mother part of the mother/infant sadomasochistic enactment into me. Yet, in her dream she re-owned this part that related to her aggression, as well in the analytic sessions. Obviously she was barricading herself against hearing me to avoid surrendering to a transference mother she projected into me, who she feared would kill her as she became vulnerable. So in the session Ms. Z. treated me as the mother intruding into her, as if she was the victimized infant. In other words, when I responded to her, I was experienced as the intruding metallic breast mother that she herself appeared as in her dream. When I spoke louder, to get through to her, Ms. Z. experienced me as the “battering ram,” a metaphoric image of the metallic breast mother she experienced herself as being in the dream, as she unconsciously identified with her one and only mother of infancy to whom she was still tied in a hostile, sadomasochistic symbiosis. Ms. Z. both projected her sadistic mother half into me and identified with the mother at the same time by sadistically controlling and impinging on me. Here was the projective identification. In fact, when Ms. Z. progressed developmentally to projection from projective-identification, because she had gradually surrendered to contact and connection that allowed her to take in more benign and dialectically related interactions through psychic internalization, she no longer induced in me a feeling of being trapped in time and space, as she had when I was being forcibly enlisted to play out her internal sadomasochistic enactment. Time opened up as well as space for us both as Ms. Z. could now allow potential space between us, so that when she now projected a critical mother onto me, a higher level of the metallic and intrusive breast mother, I did not actually feel critical. I was not trapped in her projection as I had been when she was formerly at the level of projective identification. I could hear the transference fantasy related to her mental projection as a thought, the thought that I was a critical mother. However, I no longer was forced to feel like I really was such a mother, as I had been forced to feel like the “battering ram” in the past when I repeated myself or spoke louder. With the potential space between us opening, time also opened so that time as no longer felt as trapping the two of us in the midst of an enactment. Time transformed from a persecutory battering ram that was trapping us both, into more of a holding mother that could contain the projections as thoughts and feelings to be discussed, rather than being felt as intrusive forces dominating us both, as when in the past we had each felt victimized as we each experienced the other as sadistically controlling and dominating. Now mortality could begin to

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

have its dialectic with immortality as the moment of experiencing opened up, rather than being obviated by trenchant enactment.

Similarly, with Harold, when Harold regressed to the level of projective-identification, I was experienced by him as a dominating father lecturing to him, even as he was the one blocking me out as he spoke in a sealed off and blockaded or warded off monologue. Harold's aggression was enacted by his lecturing me, but if I tried to speak when he was thus blocking me out, I was felt as dominating him, in terms of his projecting into me the psychic fantasy of his father's monologues that felt like forceful and domineering lectures from his father during his childhood. Harold seemed to be projecting into me the very thing he was doing and enacting in the moment, not just seeing me in that way through a mere mental projection. As Harold enacted this projective-identification with me, and to the extent that I got caught up in it by speaking louder or more forcefully, time ceased to be flowing and holding. Time became a forceful persecutor for us both, as we both felt trapped and imprisoned in that moment of time that could seem like it was lasting forever in a coercive and negative way, not as the "eternal now" of a process that is flowing through the immediate moment of time as holding.

The Analyst's Breathing

I have sometimes become aware when treating someone who is in a very vulnerable position on my analytic couch, of how my intuitive sense of my own breathing can affect the flow of time as well as space in a session (see Kavaler-Adler, 2003a, chapters on "Laura"). I first became aware of this with a male patient who was filled with powerful longings to express the most tender and vulnerable feelings of love and desire for me in my role as his analyst, and in my transference role as his early infant and childhood mother. This male patient, who I will call Richard, would become overwhelmed by his wishes share and surrender to his passionate desire and love for me. He would start to express these feelings, which would be the route to his freeing himself to connect with his core self, and to be related to his deepest needs and desires. Then he would suddenly feel overwhelmed! Sometimes Richard would feel like he had to sit up

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

as he became dizzy from his state of primal desire that might make him feel in a trance. Other times he might begin to get the words out that went with his feelings, something that he was longing to do. He would begin to say, "I want you so much now," or, "I feel such tender love for you." I could see him struggling to go on with his depth of feeling communication. I began to notice that sometimes I had an effect on whether he could go on with the expression of his feelings by the state of my own breathing. I would sense suddenly that I was intuitively responding to his struggle to express himself at this vulnerable level by opening my breathing to a larger proportion than usual, so that he would be able to sustain his level of overt feeling expression, and would be able to complete the birth of his deeper self that was coming out into the world, through his heart, but at a depth of infant level feeling experience that frightened him.

As I opened my breathing, which I at first did totally intuitively, without thinking, I realized that I was opening a receptive transitional or potential space between us, in D. W. Winnicott's terms, so that he could feel I was emotionally holding him without, of course, ever actually touching him. But what I am becoming aware of now, in writing this paper, is that I was also opening up time for my patient by opening up my breathing, as well as opening up space for my patient, as well as for myself, while opening my breathing during the analytic session. As potential space opened between us, my own images of space transformed from linear time that became persecutory when space was blocked, to time felt and imagined as a holding mother with permeable boundaries, rather than a mother with rigid limits or deadlines. When Richard and I could fully engage with his tender and also passionate expressions of love, we became suspended together in a psychoanalytic form of Argentine Tango, for it does take two to tango. My breathing enlarged and opened space for Richard to do his dance of self-expression, and ultimately to take his intimate expressions into the realm of understanding the symbolic meaning of his love that had wanted to express itself during his whole life, but which had been blocked by his mother's punitive and assaultive reactions to him as he got older. His early infant expressions of love had been received by his mother, and these were the ones he wanted to communicate to me, but combined with an adult level of passion and desire and symbolic word communication. Once Richard was free to express his deepest passions and longings fully to me in a very personal and intimate way, which he had only felt allowed to do formerly during his infancy, having felt severely rejected later by both his mother and by other women-- he could

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

begin to move on with his life. Love relations in the world became possible for Richard, and so did his own creative work self-expression. But all this developed out of the analytic moment when the tango of his lead and my receptive breathing, opening as a good non anticipating follower in tango, allowed us to live pregnant with both life and meaning in the holding moment of time. Only through this intuitively shared feeling, and therefore holding, moment could a whole therapeutic process emerge that would allow Richard to unfold as an authentic and unique being, rather than as a reactive man who was continually fending off his mother's harsh and punitive demands and assaults. I would open my breathing as I would intuitively follow his lead or intention, which developed out of his heart felt longings and their need for expression. Here was the dance of Argentine Tango in the analytic session, which can most vividly be understood from the language of object relations theory, since object relations theory is the language that speaks of space and time dimensions through the uniquely human language of contact and connection—not the language of a computer or machine.

From Dueling to Dancing, From Polarization to Dialectic

In the history of Argentine Tango, there has been an evolution from a macho culture in which knife fights were simulated in the dance of tango (see Virginia Gift, 2008), and where the male lead dominated rather than interacted with a fully equal female follower, into a fully interactive and dialectical dance of conversation between either a male or female leader and a male or female follower. First, dueling became dancing and the sadomasochism of the macho dueling lived within the earlier form of the dance of Argentine Tango. Then, the dueling within the dance transformed as immigrant Italian males and European men and women entered the dance that was at first danced by the most macho gaucho and Black males. Ultimately, Argentine Tango became a universal dance that has reached radical levels of popularity all over the world. With its European, American, and universal influences the polarized duel between male and male in the dance, or between the dominant male leader and the submissive female partner, has dramatically transformed into a full dialectic of equal partners, one leading and the other following, or sometimes switching back and forth between lead and follow. In either case, however, it is the sustaining of conversation between the partners that now most fully

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

characterizes the dance. To experience the dialectical conversation or dialogue of tango partnership, as well as partnership with the music to which we all dance the dance, is a vivid departure from the polarized sadomasochistic battles between dueling macho men, or between man and woman in the battle of the sexes. Today, Argentine Tango speaks to all those that participate in its organic flow, and to all those who surrender fully to the experience of it taking two to tango, and two to have the tango conversation, of endless and infinite possibilities.

Every time that a woman dances with a different man she enters a new world of possibilities, but even with one man she experiences the dance anew with each new figure, turn, motion, and flow of both steps and connection within the embrace she shares with her partner and with the music. When teachers teach tango today, they often refer to all the different “possibilities” that evolve as one chooses any direction, intention, steps, or figures within the dance. As one senior female maestro has taught, “the more secure the frame of the embrace and the more correct the motions of both partners to flow together as one, the more “possibilities” there are in each moment that is pregnant with the experience of the dance.” Technique and form provide the frame for the dance to evolve in a natural organic flow, just like the “boundaried” linear time and space time frame of an analytic session provides a potential for the dance of interaction between the analysand’s lead and the analyst’s following through interpretations and responses.

In tango, as in psychoanalysis, there are also an infinite number of steps, so it is the partner connection and the internal self or intrapsychic connection that creates the full process or the full dance. In fact, despite the correct technique and embrace that provides the flow for the possibilities of connection and conversation, there is also the saying among those in tango today that there are no mistakes in tango. Interesting mistakes can provide the possibility for new steps as long as the flow continues to be promoted by a dialectical connection that can promote the conversation of the dance. So too in psychoanalysis, there are endless possibilities for mistakes to become new ways of perceiving the process and creating new steps or techniques, as long as the connection between the analyst and patient continues to promote increasing connection between the analysand’s conscious and unconscious minds. The analyst’s intention involves interpreting away the defensive polarizations that inhibit the dynamic flow of conversation.

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

Similarly, the intention of the tango partners is to enhance the dialectical talk or conversation in the dance, rather than to promote polarization. The dance of tango, and the dance of psychoanalysis as an object related dance of contact and connection, can be seen to provide interesting parallels. These parallels teach us a lot about time being holding rather than persecutory within the time bounded dance frame of mortality, which has its own dialectical conversation with the “eternal now” spiritual moment of immortality. As we move forward as a civilization, it is interesting that Argentine Tango has returned with this new view of conversation between the tango partners after almost becoming deceased as a more macho dance in Argentina, just as the evolution of psychoanalysis is now threatened with so much polarized opposition in our culture, although it thrives in the major Argentine Tango capital of Buenos Aires, where there are more psychoanalysts inhabiting the same territory than almost anywhere else. Cross-fertilizing our thinking about the metaphors and dialectics of Argentine Tango and those of the object relations dynamics of Psychoanalysis can perhaps give new life to Psychoanalysis. If the true goal is to open up conversational dialogue in the psychoanalytic session and in the psychoanalytic community then experiencing the dance of psychoanalysis may help us to give organic flow and life to the psychoanalytic dialogue.

In the moment of time in Argentine Tango, an improvisational movement by one partner, the leader, leads to a responsive movement by the follower that needs to be allowed its full form of conversational sentencing, and musical phrasing. If the Argentine Tango leader does not truly listen to his partner, as well as to the phrasing of the music, then he will be distracted by his own preoccupation with the steps in his head that he has an agenda to lead. The leader needs to allow his partner, the follower, to fully express her response to her lead. He must allow her to finish her responsive sentence in the arc and dynamic of her movement. If he interrupts this by rushing to his next leading step, the dance evolution is disrupted, and the flow of the dance in the organic holding moment of time is disrupted. So too, if the follower does not feel the weight, intention, and dynamic of her partner, and rushes into her own movement, the organic flow of the dance is disrupted and the potential holding moment of time becomes aborted and a sense of intrusion is felt. To have a true tango conversation, both leader and follower must respect the full time element of leaving room in time for the full phrasing of each partner’s communications through movement in the conversation. In this way time, becomes an ally and not a persecutor. Potential

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

time, just like potential space, allows for infinite numbers of new possibilities in relation to the experience of the moment, both in Argentine tango and in psychoanalysis. This is also the difference between surrender and submission. In tango, as in psychoanalysis, there needs to be a mutual surrender to avoid either dominance or submission, or sadism or masochism.

The Full Organic Cycle of Mourning, and of “Developmental Mourning”

As the summer comes and the analyst prepares to go on vacation the famous syndromes of “August” begin to haunt both analysts and their analytic patients, or analysands. Each patient has her or his own unique response to the analyst’s vacation, and some are more conscious than others. I would like to speak of one male patient who had a very conscious and deeply feeling experience of the separation with the analyst, because it gives us an example of the potential full organic cycle of mourning that we can all reach in order to renew life, self, creativity, and relationship.

Robert began to express his reactions to the analyst’s forthcoming departure for the summer with feelings of pain related to thoughts of missing the analyst, and of missing others who he would not see over the summer. He was excruciatingly aware of his sense of loss, and his associations very readily led to thoughts of family members who had lost to death as well as to family disputes and alienations. As he spoke of these things he expressed anger, pain, and deep grief sadness that he articulated very clearly and with a great depth that touched me as an analyst quite deeply. In the midst of this, Robert wondered if he could tolerate all these feelings, and expressed wishes that we could “end already” so that the agony of feeling all these feelings and sharing them with the analyst could be cut off or short circuited. In feeling so much, and yet expressing his wish to abort the process by having a more abrupt ending, Robert was expressing a conflict that dominates and haunts our entire culture, a conflict over whether mourning and grief is truly an organic process that has its own natural organic evolution and process, or whether we should, in the words of so much of the media today, “just get over it!” The media that tells us to “get over it” is the same media that has systematically destroyed the understanding and belief in psychoanalysis in the wider American culture. Such media reflects the new ADD

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

culture, where the high speed internet can be used as a tool to abort contact and connection between human beings and within the dialectical parts of human beings that need to talk to each other.

During one television interview that I was asked to be on as a mourning and grief expert I was asked, "Do people go on too long with their mourning?" I said, "The exact opposite is true. People generally do not understand how long mourning takes. In fact, the person who needs to mourn is often confronted with intruding others who disrupt their process by expecting it to be over already. These "others" can give out the message that they should 'just get over it!'"

Fortunately, Robert did not just get over it or cut off his therapeutic sessions in order to lessen the intensity of his conscious grief. His grief evolved naturally as his new separation evoked all the feelings he has for those loved ones he had lost. In fact, by staying with the full range of his feelings and sharing them with the analyst, a natural developmental and organic course of the therapeutic process unfolded where he came into his sessions. Robert felt a new sense of freedom, autonomy, and self-potency as a result of his full feeling commitment to the separation experience, and to the mourning process that gave birth to his true and separate self. Thus time took its full organic course, becoming supportive of autonomy rather than intrusive or disruptive or persecutory.

Conclusion on the Subject of Time as an Object

Many are driven to kill time by compulsive, contrived, and often pathologically and characterologically addictive ways of punctuating time. For example, the paranoid punctuates time with fights and sometimes with the making up afterwards. The masochist punctuates time living from punishment to punishment. The hysteric punctuates time with romances. The narcissist can punctuate time with exhibitionistic shows. The obsessional can punctuate time with perfectionistic performances. For all of us, time can be something to be marked or punctuated in such ways, so that we are not aware of the dreaded passing of time, as we contrive to control time rather than to feel persecuted by its inevitable impositions of aging, and ultimately by time's tread towards the deadline of our mortality. But what about the inevitable

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

time in between these compulsive activities we hold on to as we try and control what has been called the ravages of time? In between the fights, punishments, romances, shows, and performances how do we negotiate time? What goes on inside of us, helps us experience time as a gap in between compulsions or habits, a gap in which we can experience a potential space for creativity as opposed to experiencing what might be potential space with all its “possibilities” as a void?

By looking at the contrasting sides of a dialectic between mortality and immortality, and time related to these dimensions as holding and filled with infinite possibilities rather than as linear and persecutory, this paper has been an attempt to struggle with the question of how we negotiate time from the inside out. It is a view of how time management in its truest sense can only come from the inside out, which involves a new awareness of how we project our internal object images onto time, and how that effects our interpretations of time and our perceptions of time. If I can wake in the morning with time felt as persecutory, and enter the evening with time felt as holding then something transformational is going on inside of me that colors both my perceptions and interpretations of time.

I can either feel contained in time, or I can feel polarized with it in a duel of oppositional struggle that reflects an underlying despair about the nature of my own mortality. If time is often felt by me, particularly in the morning when I wake, as persecutory, because I have the kind of “internal saboteurs” within me that Ronald Fairbairn first spoke of in speaking of internalized bad objects from infancy, but then as I’m held in the arms of my husband in a state of warmth and intimacy, or held by him or another in the embrace of a good Argentine Tango connection, or by an internal woman, mother, and tango partner. In such a moment, on the spot, this feeling of persecutory time can transform, going from feeling persecuted by an impinging sense of time and its limits, to being at peace in the “eternal now” holding embrace of time. Then how am I receiving outside or inside good object experience to transform, without transcending, time? How is my longevity and the sense of my mortality effected by this? How am I then negotiating and thus managing time from the inside out? This paper has been an attempt to engage with these questions from many different angles, so that we can begin to reflect together on how understanding the experience of time as an object continually affects our sense of our mortality.

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

It has been an attempt to help us reflect on how understanding our ways of viewing time as an object can bring us to an acceptance of mortality, by introducing us to dialectic between linear mortality and right brain expansive eternal moments that introduce us to immortality.

Alternatively, understanding our ways of viewing time can confront us with the dread of time as an encroaching persecutor that we create ourselves when we are locked into a left brain linear perception of time, and lose our connection with any sense that we are continually, if not consciously, negotiating time. This paper is an attempt to help us all negotiate time more consciously.

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

References

- Bion, W. (1970). *Attention and interpretation*. London: Tavistock.
- Chopra, D. (1993). *Ageless body, timeless mind*. New York: Three Rivers Press.
- Gift, V. (2008). *Tango, a history of obsession*. New York: Virginia Gift Publication.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (1992). Mourning and erotic transference. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 73 (3), 527-539.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (1993a). *The compulsion to create: A psychoanalytic study of women artists*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (1993b). Object relations issues in the treatment of the preoedipal character. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 53 (1), 19-34.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (1995). Opening up blocked mourning in the preoedipal character. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 55 (2), 145-168.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (1996). *The creative mystique*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (1998). Vaginal core or vampire mouth: visceral manifestation of envy in women: The protosymbolic politics of object relations. In N. Burke (ed.), *Gender and envy* (221-240). London and New York: Routledge.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (2000a). The divine, the deviant, and the diabolical. *The International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 9, 97-111.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (2000b). *The compulsion to create: Women writers and their demon lovers*. New York: Other Press.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (2001). Anatomy of surrender. *Reportango Magazine*, N32.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (2003a). *Mourning, spirituality and psychic change: A new object relations view of psychoanalysis*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (2003b). Lesbian homoerotic transference in dialectic with developmental mourning: On the way to symbolism from the protosymbolic. *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 20 (1), 131-152.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (2004). Anatomy of regret: the critical turn towards love and creativity in the transforming schizoid personality. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 64 (1), 39-76.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (2005a). The case of David: nine years on the couch for sixty minutes, once a week. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 65, 103-134.

- Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (2005b). From benign mirror to demon lover: an object relations view of compulsion and desire. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 65 (1), 31-52.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (2006a). My graduation is my mother's funeral: Transformation from the paranoid-schizoid to the depressive position in fear of success, and the role of the internal saboteur. *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 15, 117-136.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (2006b). From neurotic guilt to existential guilt as grief: the road to interiority, agency, and compassion through mourning, Part I. *American Journal of psychoanalysis*, 66 (3), 239-259.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (2006c). From neurotic guilt to existential guilt as grief: the road to interiority, agency, and compassion through mourning, Part II. *American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 66 (4), 333-350.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (2006). Lesbian homoerotic transference in dialectic with developmental mourning: On the way to symbolism from the protosymbolic. In J. Schaverien (Ed.), *Gender, countertransference and the erotic transference: Perspectives from analytical psychology and psychoanalysis* (pp.157-183). New York: Routledge.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (2006e). Mourning and erotic transference. In J. Schaverien (Ed.), *Gender, countertransference and the erotic transference: Perspectives from analytical psychology and psychoanalysis* (pp.104-122). New York: Routledge.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (2007). Pivotal moments of surrender to mourning the parental internal object. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 94, 763-789.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (2010). Seduction, date rape, and aborted surrender. *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 19, 15-26.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013a). *The anatomy of regret: From death instinct to reparation and symbolization through vivid case studies*. London: Karnac.
- Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013b). *Klein-Winnicott dialectic: New transformative metapsychology and interactive clinical theory*. London: Karnac (in press).
- Klein, M. (1940). Mourning and its relation to manic depressive states. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 21, 125-153.
- Klein, M. (1975, 1957). Envy and gratitude. In M. Klein, *Envy and gratitude and other works, 1946-1963* (pp. 176-235). London: Hogarth.
- Rock, M. (Producer & Director) (2006). *Surrender tango* [Motion picture]. USA: Marcia Rock Studio.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1971, 1953). Transitional objects and transitional phenomena. In D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and reality* (pp.1-25). London: Tavistock.

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-32.

Winnicott, D. W. (1971, 1969). The use of the object and relating through identifications. In D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and reality* (pp.86-94). London: Tavistock.

* How to cite this article using the latest APA format style?

Kavaler-Adler, S. (2013). Dialectics of mortality and immortality: Time as an internal and transitional object experience and time as a persecutory vs. a holding object. *MindConsiliums*, 13(12), 1-31.