

Free Associations: Psychoanalysis and Culture, Media, Groups, Politics
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Letter to the Editors

Dear Kurt Jacobsen and David Morgan,

This is Gail Lewis, named as a member of the Editorial Board for Free Associations. Frankly, this membership has been meaningless as I have never been approached for any input into the editorial process, or more generally development of editorial policy. Perhaps this is not how you run the journal. This email, that acts as Letter to the Editors, is however, extremely meaningful.

It is a public letter of resignation stimulated by my understanding that you are planning to publish a piece by Daniel Burston and Cary Nelson entitled 'Under Siege'. The piece purports to be an intervention into the "crisis" in psychoanalysis, or at least within certain psychoanalytic institutions, including their training practices. It is presented as a balanced account of the elements they believe to have led to the 'crisis', making claims of a commitment to truth and self-knowledge that they see as at the core of psychoanalytic practice. That many, if not all, constituencies within the spectrum of the psychoanalytic world, share the commitment to truth and self-knowledge, is probably something that can be taken for granted. What cannot be taken for granted nor buried under self-proclaimed suggestion that these two men are the holders and arbiters of what is 'real' truth, is that the character, shape and causes of 'truth' will be linked to the differential positioning within structures and practices of power occupied by different individuals and groups. These of course will be reflected in their phenomenological, sociological, inter subjective and intra-psychic dynamics.

By now, I do not need to rehearse these themes, nor do I need to rehearse the violence, racist and misogynist thrust (and I choose that word deliberately here) of the Burston and Nelson piece, since I am aware that at least one commissioned response, that by Carter J. Carter offers a thorough refutation of their article, revealing its lies, its fabrication of a theoretical approach that doesn't exist (except in their phantasies), links to far right, fascist organizations and sites, and thoroughly exposing why they specifically attempt to 'lynch' (again a deliberately chosen term) Lara Sheehi and the ricochet effects of that attack. You have the response in Carter's piece that should, in my view, clearly demonstrate exactly why it is astounding to see that Free Associations would align itself to a tract that reproduces white supremacist 'replacement theory' discourse (even in their title!), in (necessary) entanglement with a profound anti-black, misogynistic discourse. This latter is inscribed in its presentation and belittling of the Holmes Commission and in the suggestion that no person of color, no woman, especially if she is of color, could provide the strength of leadership that they deem is required to find a way of their self-diagnosed 'crisis'.

The Burston and Nelson piece is an appalling tract of hate speech, lacking the rigour expected of a piece published in a peer-reviewed journal, but worse, that Free Associations is broadcasting this hatred, in the service of what in you, the editors, minds, is unclear. But its message to all of us who bring concerns about the psychic effects of the very hatreds the Burston and Nelson piece reproduces, into psychoanalysis as a field of theory and practice, is frankly 'get back in your places and listen to the white masters'. Free Associations: REALLY?? You are aligning with this? It is an offense and an outrage. And consider my meaningless membership of your Editorial Board ended with immediate effect.

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Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist.

Editors reply: We refer readers to the Editors' Afterward in this issue's Forum, a Forum that Dr. Lewis declined to examine before pronouncing judgment. (The Ivy League evidently has changed.) Apart from that, regarding prior contact with Dr. Lewis as a board member, in reviewing records we note she did not have the courtesy to reply to our invitation to the 2019 revival conference of Psychoanalysis and the Public Sphere, intended to commemorate journal founder Bob Young. We threw up our hands. So sorry.