

**WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF PSYCHOANALYSIS
IN THE ACADEMY?**

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The death of psychoanalysis has been foretold countless times, and yet, like the unresolvable excess of mourning, it persists. Its time is perhaps best understood as that of the unpast, the undead. Likewise, as historians, we inhabit the unpast, a past that we cannot lay to rest, that we revisit in our daily intercourse with the dead in a relationship of transference. What psychic stakes do we hold in our objects of study, what attachments to the past that both enable and delimit our understanding of the present and the recursive space of the future? In our encounter with the dead across time and space, we could be said to inhabit the space of the *barzakh* – a liminal zone, an isthmus conceptualized by the medieval mystic Ibn ʿArabi as a space between the living and the dead, between waking and sleeping life, and between consciousness and unconsciousness.

More concretely, and less speculatively, we might ask: what, precisely, does the presence of an unconscious mean for writing history? In what ways has psychoanalysis pressed us into rethinking the relationship between the unconscious and temporality? Arguably, it has given us the tools for the most sophisticated theorization of temporality intellectually available to us: contradiction and overdetermination, condensation and displacement, repetition and refinding, discontinuity and rupture. History appears not at all a seamless process as some historicists would have it; rather, the chronos of history is continually interrupted by the topoi of the unconscious. What greater relevance could there be for psychoanalysis than in our time, ‘the Times of War and Death’?

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