

MISS-ING



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Psychoanalysis 2.0

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AEON

First published in 2024 by  
Aeon Books

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A C.I.P. for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN-13: 978-1-80152-133-8

Typeset by Medlar Publishing Solutions Pvt Ltd, India

[www.aeonbooks.co.uk](http://www.aeonbooks.co.uk)

*Human beings cannot help but consider themselves to be [...] missing something.*

—Lacan, Seminar VI, p. 218.

*I had always daydreamed about having a threesome with two women. I asked my college girlfriend how she would feel about inviting her sister to join us. She wasn't so sure at first, but eventually said she was willing and would ask her sister. Then, when she told me that her sister was also willing, I knew I'd never be able to do it. My manhood was in question. The whole fantasy came crashing down.*

—An analysand



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## PREFACE

Open almost any English dictionary and you'll find plenty of "misses" and "mis-es" relevant to psychoanalytic theory and practice:

Misally (with the analysand against his/her parents, for example, or partner)

Misappropriate (someone's words as if they were one's own, for instance)

Misbehave (self-disclose, for one)

Misdiagnose (an analysand)

Mishear (something a patient says)

Misinterpret (a slip of the tongue or a dream)

Misplace (one's notes, one's datebook, or one's glasses)

Mispronounce (someone's name)

Misrecognize (a symptom, for instance)

Misremember (a date or statement)

Mistake (one person for another in the analysand's history)

Mistime (an interpretation)

Misedit (another's words)

Misprint (a name or citation from a text)

Misquote (something someone said aloud or in print)  
Misread (a handwritten note or a published text)  
Mistranscribe (a Seminar or something an analysand says)  
Mistranslate (a psychoanalytic text or something an analysand says in another tongue)

Misidentify (with someone in the patient's life)  
Misinfer (that something someone says means X instead of Y)  
Misnavigate (on the rough seas of an analysis)  
Misperceive (what is going on in a treatment)  
Misperhaps (make a slip in asking a question or setting an appointment)  
Missteer (a discussion)  
Mistype (a note to an analysand)

Misadvise (a supervisee)  
Misapply (psychoanalytic theory to the case at hand)  
Misattribute (blame for a problem in the analysis to the analysand)  
Mischaracterize (someone's complaint)  
Misunderstand (the goals of analysis)

Miscalculate (how much the analysand owes)  
Miscarry (by barking up the wrong tree)  
Mischoose (one's words)  
Misconceive (what is happening in the room)  
Misconduct (the patient to the couch before she/he is ready)  
Misconstrue (the purport of the analysand's words)  
Misdirect (the treatment)  
Misemploy (the session time)  
Misfile (one patient's notes in another's file)  
Misfire (by interpreting too soon)  
Mishandle (a patient's gripe)  
Misinform (a potential analysand about what to expect)  
Mislaid (the key to one's office)  
Mislead (a potential analysand about how long the process is going to take)  
Mismanage (the preliminary meetings by using the couch)  
Mistreat (an analysand by acting peremptorily)  
Mistrust (someone's story)

In short, misanalyze!

Analysts, being human, make mistakes just like everyone else. We often miss what we shouldn't miss, showing our *lack* of attention, foresight, acumen, dexterity, and flexibility. We even occasionally miss appointments (some analysts far more often than others)!

Certain psychoanalysts go missing in action, lapsing into inaction when they should be doing something. Others often miss something in a different sense of the term: miss their first supervisors, their old office, their early days when practice seemed simpler, their former patients.

To miss and lack is human, to fail to recognize one's failings disastrous!

One of my very first analysands, lamenting in a session her bad timing in the publishing of an article she had written on Bakhtin, came out with the graphic metaphor "near misses." Being attuned to different possible spellings of the latter sounds ("missus" and "missis"), I recalled that she had told me that she had fled her country of origin shortly after rejecting an unexpected and unwanted marriage proposal—that is, after having nearly become a Mrs. She didn't miss the connection when I slowly repeated "near ... Mrs. ... Jones" (a pseudonym). I never forgot the full-throated laughter to which that gave rise!

The reader will find in this collection many instances of misses, lacks, and failings in psychoanalytic theory, translation of analytic texts, and psychotherapeutic practice.



## NOTE

All works are referred to here with the standard format of last name(s) of author(s), year of publication, and page number. Exceptions have been made, however, for (1) the *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vols. I–XXIV (London: Hogarth Press, 1953–1974), referenced here simply by volume and page number (e.g., SE XIII, p. 23); and for (2) *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, not all volumes of which are available yet in either French or English. When available in print, they are referenced by Seminar and page number (e.g., Seminar XI, p. 23); when unpublished, they are referenced by Seminar and date of class (e.g., Seminar XIV, class given on November 11, 1966). I do not always adopt the translations given in the current English editions. A further exception has been made for (3) Lacan's *Écrits*, which is cited repeatedly. The page numbers given here refer to *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English* (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006).

A Bibliography of Lacan's Seminars and a References section are found at the end of the volume.

