The last time that the psychoanalytic issue of “termination” served as a focus of study for a *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* issue was in 1982. A number of questions were addressed: (1) criteria for termination; (2) the process of termination; and (3) the subjective response to termination of analysand and analyst on those occasions when there is a sense of success as well as at those times when there is a sense of premature interruption.

Over the 25 years following this issue of *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, we have witnessed and participated in the ongoing emergence of two psychoanalytic paradigm shifts: the first, objectivism to constructivism and the second, intrapsychic to relational field theory. During the same period of time psychoanalysis has been in the process of integrating developments in infant and attachment research, cognitive psychology, and neuroscientific findings that have fundamentally altered our conceptualizations of psychological development, pathogenesis, transference, and therapeutic action.

We, thus, find it timely to revisit and to investigate the impact of these revolutionary changes in psychoanalytic thinking on the concept of termination and the clinical practice of analytic endings. Questions we wish to address include: (1) How do these paradigm changes in psychoanalysis affect our view of termination? (2) Does or should analysis end? (3) How does analysis end and how does it continue? (4) How do analysts and analysands negotiate endings and continuations? And (5) What is the experience like for each of the two participants, analysand and analyst? In keeping with our purpose and the tradition of *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, we have invited a group of prominent authors who offer a range of psychoanalytic perspectives on our topic.

Subsequent to the studies of Stephen Firestein (1978) and Judith Viorst (1982), examining the psychological meanings of termination for psychoanalysts, Heather Craig (2002) and Lora Tessman (2003) have published two important research studies investigating the termination experiences of psychoanalytic candidates. We asked Heather Craig to lead off our project with a particular focus on the clinical implications of her research project. In turn, we have asked our group of authors to use Craig’s conclusions as a springboard for their theoretical and clinical considerations on the topic of termination.

Susan Mendenhall provides a detailed historical rendition of the concept of termination and develops her idea of “variously evolving analytic relationships.” Kenneth Frank develops a relational perspective on what he prefers to call “analytic endings.” He emphasizes the implications both for the transference and what he calls “the personal relationship.” Joseph Schachter describes the celebratory aspect of endings and addresses his research on “post-termination contact.” George Moraitis, highlighting primarily the analyst’s experience of his bond to his analysand, posits that “analyses should be open-ended but not interminable,” and focuses on the need for realistic expectations of both in the analytic dyad.
Estelle Shane, a contributor to the 1982 issue of *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, delineates the changes in her views of termination from a more classical position in 1982 to her current contemporary self-psychological and nonlinear dynamic systems perspective. Alexandra Harrison, a child analyst and researcher, addresses the topic from an infant/child research perspective, utilizing video microanalysis and Tronick’s dyadic, dynamic systems model.

We are deeply grateful to our authors for their scholarly and clinically sensitive contributions to the topic of analytic endings. They have provided a theoretical, clinical, and emotional richness that demonstrates the evolving nature of the concept and clinical practice of “termination” that, we are sure, you, as a reader, will find to be intellectually challenging.

James L. Fosshage
Sandra G. Hershberg

*Issue Editors*

**REFERENCES**


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¹The non-alphabetical listing of the co-editors of this *Psychoanalytic Inquiry* issue reflects the fact that Sandra Hershberg initiated and provided overall leadership to the compilation of this issue. The alphabetical listing of the authors for the Prologue and Epilogue reflect the mutuality of the authorship of these sections.