

Dr Daniel Brass - Statement in support of nomination for IPSO President-Elect

Melbourne, Australia

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A tutor introduced me to psychoanalysis in the form of Peter Gay's *The Freud Reader* when I was an undergraduate arts student. The following week was a turning point. I had *heard* of Freud and psychoanalysis and had absorbed some psychoanalytic ideas but reading Freud revealed to me the undeniable *reality* of the unconscious and its power.

I began my own therapy, which later became an analysis, and wrote an honours thesis on Virginia Woolf, whose intellectual world was so influenced by psychoanalysis. A doctorate in literature followed but took a slightly different direction, focusing on the mid-nineteenth century. Perhaps this was an effort to understand the context in which psychoanalysis emerged.

Over the next few years, I realised that I wanted to *become* a psychoanalyst. No one told me that there were more direct routes so I embarked on a degree in medicine and then training in psychiatry. Psychoanalysis was always the lodestar and I never lost sight of it.

Now, years later, here I am: in psychoanalytic training, experiencing all its delights and frustrations, and feeling less and less certain that I know or have ever known anything.

IPSO represents an ideal of international cooperation and collaboration, embracing difference. IPSO welcomes all. As president-elect and president, I will work to expand opportunities for students of psychoanalysis to gather, exchange and grow.

Australia is both an island and a continent. It has a small population but richly diverse population. To reach the Americas (North and South) takes 14 hours on a plane; Europe, 24 hours. Tokyo is 10 hours; Beijing nearly 12. It can be difficult for us to connect with colleagues abroad even though most Australians' heritage lies in these distant places.

Our position offers a new and unique perspective. Australia is part of the IPA's European region and there are deep cultural connections both with Europe and with many other parts of the world. But geographically Australia could not be further from Europe. We could play with this paradox.

The Asia-Pacific is home to a vibrant and expanding analytic community. As the IPA moves towards the establishment of a fourth IPA Region, IPSO can lead the way in having a president from this region, engaging the analytic 'new world' from a position of cultural and intellectual plurality.

This year marks 50 years since the foundation of IPSO in 1975. IPSO's first president was an Australian who trained in psychoanalysis in London in the 1970s.

So much has changed in 50 years. We now meet and communicate easily online and travel is simpler. Yet the illusion of closeness masks deep conflicts which have recently erupted in dramatic ways: in the many wars now unfolding around the world but also in our polarised and conflicted ways of thinking and feeling.

I wanted to train in psychoanalysis so I could be in contact with like-minded people, trying to understand one another and our work, together and ever more deeply, *as people*.

How better to do this than as president of IPSO?

Meeting colleagues at conferences, hearing and sharing our work, is always a delight and never fails to deepen and widen my understanding. Before studying medicine, I joined psychoanalytic seminars and over the years I have attended analytic meetings locally and internationally: many seminars, conferences and lectures in Sydney, Melbourne and London; the IPA congresses in Buenos Aires (2017), London (2019) and Vancouver (2021, sadly online); the IPA Asia-Pacific conferences in Tokyo (2018) and Sydney (2024); the EPF congress in Firenze (2024); the Frances Tustin Memorial Conference in Mumbai (2024).

These experiences have been fundamental for my development as a doctor, as a psychiatrist and as I now begin a process which I hope will continue for the rest of my life: 'becoming' – and yet never *finally* becoming – a psychoanalyst.

Bringing people together and finding practical ways to nurture exchange has been my priority and passion in leadership positions. I have held many such positions including representing fellow students in my master's degree, psychiatry trainees to our national college of psychiatry, my candidate group in analytic training and Australian analytic candidates to IPSO. I am a member of the Education Committee of the national college of psychiatry and am actively involved with the Balint Society of Australia and New Zealand, serving as its president since 2022.

As president of IPSO, I will work to support and expand international collaboration and cooperation among psychoanalytic candidates. Having the opportunity to do so would be a privilege and an honour.

However you vote in these elections, please do engage with IPSO and vote!