

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

### On Specificity

BY HENRY F. SMITH, M.D.

A recent article in the *New York Times Book Review* held Freud and his followers responsible for the death of contemporary fiction (Siegel 2005). It is an old argument. No longer full of the particular, under the alleged Freudian yoke characters have been reduced to generalities. The article provoked a storm of reasoned protest for this and other charges.

Curiously—and perhaps as a sign of the shifting cultural and political winds—nearly twenty years earlier in the same *New York Times Book Review*, its then editor, Anatole Broyard, ran an interview with a friend, a retired psychoanalyst. Now an avid reader of fiction, the analyst commented that what he missed most about clinical practice—and could not find in the contemporary novels he read—was the “terrific specificity” and “gorgeous incongruities” he used to encounter in each of his patients. He compared “authors who aren’t faithful to their characters” to patients “who lie about their dreams.” Broyard, clearly sympathetic to psychoanalysis and its appreciation of detail, entitled his editorial “Fiction That Lies about Its Dreams” (Broyard 1986, p. 11).

As in fiction, one of the telltale signs of a paper we want to read is its appreciation for the specificity and incongruity that bring patients and ideas to life. The papers in this issue of the *Quarterly* illustrate the enormous variety of form, subject matter, and method by which this may be accomplished, as is characteristic of creative and disciplined thinking in contemporary psychoanalysis.

Most of them speak for themselves. The two essays that open this issue, however, one by Ilse Grubrich-Simitis, the other by Gil-

bert Cole, may benefit from a word of introduction. The one a historical, the other a contemporary, commentary, they could not be more dissimilar in form, subject, and method, but they share a particularity of thinking and description that would have pleased Broyard and his friend, and give the lie to the *Times*' more recent argument.

Ilse Grubrich-Simitis's commentary on the newly published Freud-Eitingon correspondence is much more than a book review essay. Grubrich-Simitis is known to many readers as an eminent Freud scholar, and her article reflects historical scholarship of the highest order in its use of primary data, its specificity, and its impartiality. In it you will hear details—not always flattering ones—of Freud's private life and personal reactions, set in the context of everyday life, as it was lived in Europe between the two world wars and in the inner chambers of psychoanalysis when it was unfolding as a social project.

Some of these details emerge from letters in much the same way they do from the couch. The epistolary form is like that. It lends itself to spontaneity, to bits of revelation, to simplicity of expression, and to surprise. Ideas tend to come off the top of the writer's head, associatively, without extended qualifiers and disclaimers. When writing was accomplished only by pen and ink, and addressed to trusted friends, drafts and revisions—not to mention additions by pasting and cutting—were rare. And it lends the form a lifelikeness. But it can also leave letters with a level of ambiguity beyond the ordinary ambiguities of expository writing.

In the writing of a letter, ambiguities and contradictions inhabit the text much as they do the life of the mind. We know about such things from our experiences on and behind the couch. In the consulting room, we accept ambiguity, we analyze contradiction, and we listen patiently, expectantly, and contextually to try to understand patients' meanings. Letters, in turn, draw upon the patience and goodwill of the recipient—and the context of the epistolary relationship—either to decipher the ambiguity and complete the writer's meaning, or to leave it indefinite. Clarifications may follow in subsequent letters, or offstage, as it were, never to see written form.

Letters like Freud's that become public property, however, must rely on the forbearance of the reader. And herein lies a caution. In reading such letters as historical documents, it can be tempting to regard them as speaking revealed truth—to interpret them, that is, too literally and too definitively, forgetting the complexity, conflictual nature, and competing conscious and unconscious motives of the writer. Thus we may use historical letters to suit our own purposes and arguments, as if any one comment might be the final word on the matter. As readers, we have to content ourselves with the limitations, as well as the facilitations, of the form. Grubrich-Simitis is particularly careful in this regard.

As exchanges of personal letters increasingly become a habit of the historical past, they give us a chance to reflect on what is unique to epistolary writing. First, it would seem that there are conventional patterns, structures, and expressions unique to letter-writing in general and particular to the era and culture in which they are written. And, too, there are conventional or formal sentiments shaped by and expressed in those structures. When we read a series of letters, however, it is *against* this very background of form and formality (and *because* of it) that the more unusual and personal detail stands out in all its "terrific specificity." In this, reading a series of letters is like psychoanalytic listening, wherein we foster a process and a formal structure within which we hope to hear the surprising and the incongruous against the backdrop of the conventional and the expected. Jacob Arlow, himself one of the great psychoanalytic correspondents, once wrote that an analyst should be "surprised all the time," adding, "I wouldn't trust anyone to reach any new conclusions if he were not continually surprised" (Arlow 1992). You will see that Grubrich-Simitis, herself a student of the unexpected, has mined these letters for just such surprises in order to offer us new glimpses into the life of their creator, his family and friends, and their passions—or rather, in the spirit of these letters, their *cathexes*.

On this last point, one of the series of letters to which Grubrich-Simitis directs our attention concerns Freud's frustration with his cancer of the palate and the prosthesis he was forced to use. In

one letter, Freud comments with evident sarcasm on the attention his painful prosthesis commands, noting “the consumption of all freely mobile energy in organ cathexis, as demanded by the incredibly luxuriant paresthesias” (see p. 952 of Grubrich-Simitis’s commentary).

Rather than *cathexis*, the word Freud actually used was the German term *besetzung*, and later in this issue of the *Quarterly*, you will find a fortuitous companion piece to this passage. Peter Hoffer was the translator of the earlier Freud–Ferenczi correspondence (Freud and Ferenczi 1993–2000), and in his brief communication, Hoffer gives us a short exegesis on the term *cathexis*, Strachey’s controversial English translation of *besetzung*. From Hoffer we learn that in ordinary German, *besetzung*, because of its derivation, has both an active and a passive connotation, not unlike the Greek middle voice (Greenberg 2005). In other words, a person can cathect something, but the thing cathected (*bezetzt*) is then reserved exclusively for that purpose—occupied, so to speak, as a toilet is occupied (*bezetzt*) by the person using it. This latter meaning is lost when we substitute the more colloquial term *investment* for *cathexis*. We lose the sense that some entity is occupied by something or someone and cannot be used for any other purpose.

Freud was particularly fond of the term *besetzung*, forming various neologisms with it, and as a result of Hoffer’s explication, we can now understand more of his particular frustration with his body and its “organ cathexis.” Because of the “luxuriant paresthesias” in his jaw, it—and, by extension, his body—was occupied by them, reserved exclusively for them and their “demands.” Perhaps in Freud’s sarcasm we can also hear his disgust with himself for passively succumbing to this preemptive cathexis of his body, its indignity and wastefulness.

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The second commentary to which I want to call the reader’s attention is by Gilbert Cole, and it is very much a contemporary one. If most of the papers in this issue focus on the details of a clinical encounter or point of theory, while Grubrich-Simitis takes as her

subject the details of Freud's private preoccupations, Cole's subject is an invitation he received to participate in a symposium, the implications of which he pursues with the same relentless attention to its specificities and incongruities as Grubrich-Simitis does hers.

Unique in form and tone, his is the second in our series of Special Presentations that were written to be presented orally, but, following peer review, were judged to be so unusual in their structure—and their structure so necessary to their content—that we have chosen to publish them with only minor modifications. Coincidentally, this essay, too, begins with a letter (or, more precisely, an e-mail), the aforesaid invitation to speak on the subject, it turns out, of “same-sex love.” With great seriousness of purpose, as well as considerable wit, Cole examines this invitation and its implications in order to analyze the ways in which we categorize others, turning them into specimens, and the limitations this process puts on any meaningful appreciation of one another. This is what Cole means by “categories as symptoms.” You will find more data for his position in our forthcoming Special Issue on “Race, Culture, and Ethnicity in the Consulting Room” (January 2006), a subject that contains a seemingly infinite source of categories that lend themselves to what Cole calls “the endlessly circulating process of repudiation and projection” (p. 979).

But the fact that this process of repudiation and projection is, in fact, “endlessly circulating” is a cautionary tale for the reader of Cole's piece. For, in a different sense than with Freud's letters, but no less destructively, the temptation is to reach too quickly toward judgment. Cole's piece, like Friedman's (2005) in our last issue, is a dialogue with the reader, and it is inevitable that Cole's reader, like Friedman's, will be uncomfortable—uncomfortable because Cole's subject matter is disturbing; uncomfortable because Cole is interpreting us, his readers, and our own symptomatic uses of categorization and contempt; and uncomfortable because the “endlessly circulating” nature of his subject inevitably pulls his readers into an enactment with him of the very symptom he is interpreting.

We know about such enactments in the consulting room, where analyst and patient are continually and inevitably actualizing the

very thing they are analyzing. Though by no means limited to the consulting room, this process is, in my view, the essence of what we study in psychoanalysis (Smith, in press). But in this case, the repudiations and projections of which Cole speaks are so hot, the subject matter so traumatic, and the action of the piece so, well, active, that the process is particularly unstable, tempting the reader to reverse the charge: "Don't tell me I am repudiating you—you are repudiating *me*." And in so doing, the reader dismisses, indeed repudiates, Cole and his position. It is because of the very fact that we are tempted in this way—and, again, I would suggest it is an inevitable and universal temptation—that Cole's interpretation is so effective. He is interpreting at the "point of urgency," as Strachey (1934, p. 150) might put it, as it is happening, in the transference to him. I urge you, as you feel pulled to repudiate and reject, to listen carefully to Cole's voice and to the precise and disturbing message he delivers.

Here is *my* version of one of his messages: We turn others (all others to some extent, but some more consistently than others) into specimens, eliminating their specificity, as we fill them with our own denigrated inner lives and hate them even as we seem to love or tolerate them.

Next, and at the risk of taking you to his punch line too quickly, here is Cole's version of his message in his own words—in my view, words that will and should be quoted time and again:

There is no such thing as same-sex love. . . . I am gay precisely to the extent to which you think you are straight. And I am certain that the converse is also true: you are straight precisely to the extent to which I think I am gay . . . . To regard this distinction as telling me anything deeply meaningful about any of you is a symptom. And the thought that my being identified as gay tells you anything at all about me is equally a symptom. [pp. 985-986]

I do not mean to minimize the particularity of Cole's observation as it pertains to gay individuals, but I do believe he is speaking of habits of mind and development that begin in infancy, persist throughout life, and have their expression in the projection and

repudiation of any category that is ripe for devaluation by virtue, for example, of its race, culture, gender, or age. In my view, Cole is outlining here, more clearly than anywhere else I know, a fundamental aspect of how we view others. It is identifiable both as an intrapsychic phenomenon and in its most global and horrific projected forms that result in the social and cultural traumas in which we all participate. Every psychoanalytic theory has its own way of trying to understand this phenomenon and to interpret it. And yet it persists in all its cruelty. The symptomatic process of categorization of which Cole speaks is the very opposite of what we claim to be about as psychoanalysts, abolishing, as it does, those very details that Broyard and his friend so treasured, the “terrific specificity” and “gorgeous incongruities” of the individual.

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**"HOW ARE YOU MANAGING  
WITH HEATING AND LIGHTING,  
HERR PROFESSOR?"**

**ON THE PUBLICATION OF THE FREUD-  
EITINGON CORRESPONDENCE<sup>1</sup>**

BY ILSE GRUBRICH-SIMITIS

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The above is one of the countless solicitous questions directed by Max Eitingon to Sigmund Freud during the course of their correspondence, which extended over a period of over thirty years, from 1906 to 1939. It comes in a letter of 1 November 1919, and thus refers, in the misery of the immediate postwar period, to a matter of everyday concern that was at the time of existential importance.

Eitingon, who was born in Russia in 1881 and raised in Leipzig from the age of thirteen, had in fact been the first of the Zurich Burghölzli group around Eugen Bleuler to have called on Freud in Vienna, as a young medical student in January 1907, even before Karl Abraham and C. G. Jung. Nor did he ever allow this personal

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Translation by Philip Slotkin, M.A.

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<sup>1</sup> *Editor's Note:* The *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* is pleased to publish this essay on *Sigmund Freud/Max Eitingon, Briefwechsel 1906-1939*, which is the first complete publication of the Freud-Eitingon correspondence. Edited by Michael Schröter, the two volumes were published in 2004 by edition diskord in Tübingen, Germany. The original German version of the following essay, entitled " 'Wie sieht es mit der Beheizungs- und Beleuchtungsfrage bei Ihnen aus, Herr Professor?' Zum Erscheinen des Freud-Eitingon-Briefwechsels," was published earlier in 2005 in *Psyche*, 59: 266-290.



contact to be broken off; having moved to Berlin for specialist neurological training at Hermann Oppenheim's clinic, he even underwent a kind of "training analysis" while out walking with Freud during a stay in Vienna in October and November 1909. Yet it was only in the years after the First World War that the relationship between the two men took on its particular complexion and intensity.

Let us for a moment call to mind the situation prevailing at that time. During the war, owing to the interruption of his international contacts and the fact that most of his closest collaborators were serving at the front, Freud found himself in a state of isolation that reminded him of the lonely years of the genesis of psychoanalysis. Toward the end of the war, however, his science—thanks to its contributions to the theory and therapy of the war neuroses that were such an object of concern at the time—suddenly attracted an unprecedented degree of attention among the public and the medical profession, so that Freud scented a new dawn.

The text most clearly reflecting the almost euphoric mood of a fresh departure that characterized this short phase is "Lines of Advance in Psycho-Analytic Therapy" (1919), Freud's address to the Fifth International Psychoanalytical Congress in Budapest, delivered at the end of September 1918. Taking up some of Sándor Ferenczi's new ideas on treatment technique, and apparently prepared to adapt and compromise, he sketched out some measures, which might today be felt almost to belong in the realm of behavioral therapy, intended not only to reinforce the analyst's "activity," but also to abbreviate the classical procedure. In addition, he postulated that not just the "well-to-do classes" (Freud 1919, p. 166) were entitled to psychoanalytic assistance. At the time, he argued, the therapeutic effect of psychoanalysis was limited not only by the still small number of practicing analysts, but also, and in particular, by the absence of outpatient clinics offering free treatment to the poor. Here, for the first and only time, Freud used the famous formulation that "the large-scale application of our therapy will compel us to alloy the pure gold of analysis freely with the copper of direct suggestion" (p. 168). Since state-sponsored organizations of this kind would not be established in the foreseeable future,

probably “these institutions will first be started by private charity” (p. 167).

Freud had set down this text in the summer of 1918 while a guest in the house of a highly educated, socially committed Budapest brewer. In the person of Anton von Freund, just such a beneficent Maecenas had indeed taken the stage. Even before the end of the war, he had been able to place a considerable sum of money at the disposal of the city of Budapest for “the foundation of a psycho-analytic Institute . . . in which analysis was to be practised, taught and made accessible to the people. It was intended to train a considerable number of physicians in this Institute. . . . The founder handed over a relatively smaller sum to Professor Freud for the foundation of an international psycho-analytic publishing house” (Freud 1920a, p. 268). Anton von Freund’s patronage did indeed now seem to foreshadow an instant broadening and deepening of the impact of psychoanalysis, not to say a gradual increase in its recognition by the public at large.

However, von Freund was suffering from cancer, and by 20 January 1920 he was dead, aged only forty. In a letter informing Max Eitingon of this loss the next day, Freud also told him that among von Freund’s last words was the following comment about Eitingon himself: “I know that he will be my successor” (p. 187<sup>2</sup>). Already in his obituary, Freud was in effect placing this successorship on record: “The example which von Freund sought to set has already had its effect. A few weeks after his death, thanks to the energy and liberality of Dr. Max Eitingon, the first psycho-analytical out-patients’ clinic has been opened” (1920a, p. 268).

Furthermore, drawing on the financial resources available to him from his family firm of international fur traders with a network of branches in many countries, Max Eitingon did inherit this mantle, offering wide-ranging support for more than a decade until the onset of the world economic crisis—particularly as von

<sup>2</sup> All page numbers given in this essay without further bibliographic details refer to the Freud-Eitingon correspondence (Freud and Eitingon 2004), of which an English edition does not yet exist. Translations have therefore been rendered by the translator.

Freund's funds soon evaporated owing to transfers, currency losses, and inflation. And as the question in the title of this essay indicates, Eitingon literally made sure that the Freud family was provided for in the hardship of the postwar period, sending them eggs, flour, fat, and other basic necessities. He had indeed persuaded the Berlin Psychoanalytic Association to establish the outpatient clinic (known as the Polyclinic), funded predominantly from his own resources, in which, under the management of himself and Ernst Simmel, poorer sections of the population were offered psychoanalytic help either free of charge or at reasonable prices.<sup>3</sup>

This facility at the same time served as a training institution for the new generation of psychoanalysts, and was later responsible for the development of the fundamental structures, still valid today, of a regular, institutionalized psychoanalytic training system with the three pillars of training analysis, theoretical instruction, and control analyses (supervision). Finally, from 1919 on, Eitingon, either successively or, in some cases, simultaneously, assumed a large number of important administrative functions and key positions—among others, as a committee member (here again as Anton von Freund's successor); as Director of the Berlin Polyclinic and of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute; as Chairman of the International Training Commission; as Secretary, and then for seven years President, of the International Psychoanalytical Association; as confidant and adviser, at first unofficial, to Freud on the funding and organization of the Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag (the international psychoanalytic publishing house, or *Verlag*), and eventually as a partner in the limited company that ran the *Verlag*; as editor of the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse*; later, in exile, he also founded the Palestine Psychoanalytic Association. Not long before Eitingon's emigration, Freud had expressed his indis-

<sup>3</sup> As late as the fall of 1933, when Eitingon was preparing to emigrate to Palestine and asked Freud for a testimonial in support of his application for a license to practice, Freud drew attention to this continuing tradition by explicitly emphasizing in that document that Eitingon's initiative had in those early days made it possible "to put analytic therapy within the reach of broad sections of the impecunious population" in Berlin (p. 869).

pensability in the following wish: "Most of all I would like to see you as president for life, to assure the future of my problem children, the International Association and the *Verlag*" (p. 742).

Until now, we could at most guess—not least because of Eitingon's silence—about how, during the phase when the psychoanalytic movement adopted its decisive orientation toward the West and became increasingly internationalized, Eitingon over the years actually came to be one of the movement's central figures, and what changes his relationship with Sigmund Freud underwent, against the background of a complex and, as we shall see, quite mutual dependence replete with latent conflict. For, as we know, if his output is compared with the telling written legacy of other outstanding figures of the pioneering period, he hardly features at all as an author. But now that the Freud-Eitingon correspondence has been published, we can at last acquaint ourselves with Max Eitingon as a letter-writer over many years of private dialogue with the founder of psychoanalysis.

– II –

To be sure, anyone who embarks on the voluminous reading adventure of some 1,000 pages with the expectation of discovering a treasure house of theoretical reflections similar to those found in the correspondences with Karl Abraham, Sándor Ferenczi, or C. G. Jung, or in the Fliess documents, will be disappointed. Those, of course, have enabled us not only to reconstruct more reliably the history of Freud's thought, the beginnings of certain core concepts, and the rhythms of his creative process, but also to gain insight into the origins of the important works of that first pioneer generation, including the seeds of deviation and secession. Freud admittedly also allowed Max Eitingon, whose clarity of thought he appreciated highly, to on occasion play a part in the genesis of new writings, reading manuscripts to him aloud or sending them to him for criticism, and he repeatedly asked him for his opinion. It is quite conceivable that intense oral exchanges took place during Eitingon's regular visits to Vienna, but in the letters, at any rate, few traces of systematic intellectual debate are to be found.

Yet there are many passages in which the reader can observe Freud trying out formulations—for example, on the concepts of the fetish (“a kind of false Demetrius . . . defiance<sup>4</sup> of castration and protection from homosexuality” [p. 541]), of narcissism, of the archaic heritage, and of phylogenetic schemata. We can watch him reflecting on why he felt he could discern in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920b) a destructive and self-destructive attack on his own work, and allowing himself to be reassured by Eitingon, who instead recognized in the “positively tragic tension” (p. 229) of this text a new dynamization of certain fundamental psychoanalytic concepts that had become all too static. In this context, Eitingon’s doubts about the concept of the compulsion to repeat or the justification for the regressive character of the drives do indeed seem to have led to an extended theoretical exchange of views. Finally, the manifold epistolary utterances dating from the time of Freud’s composition of his work of old age, *Moses and Monotheism*, currently the subject of such passionate debate, are particularly informative: “I am writing to you again about the ‘Moses,’” says Eitingon, now settled in Palestine, at the beginning of a letter of 21 October 1934, while Freud, still in Vienna, answers six days later: “I too am writing to you about the ‘Moses’” (p. 882)—and what they wrote to each other is thoroughly worth reading.

Since the theoretical content of the correspondence nevertheless does not bear comparison with that of the other collections of letters mentioned, it appears that, at first, the publication of a selected edition only was contemplated, with summaries of the unpublished material. The eventual decision to reproduce in full all the documents currently known is praiseworthy, if only because, with the demise of the culture of letter writing, historical research will of course be deprived in the future of such valuable material, in which *private life*, in the sense that Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby (1987-1991) use the term, is reflected in all its manifold facets and in tangibly concrete form—as Paul Veyne (1989) puts it, literally from cradle to grave.

<sup>4</sup> *Translator’s Note:* To emphasize the point he is making, Freud here uses the archaic, poetic word *Trutz* instead of the modern *Trotz*.

We thus become acquainted with a plethora of details, of how people in those days dealt with births, illnesses, and deaths, with young parents, with the suffering and the grieving, how feasts, engagements, and weddings were celebrated, how children were approached, how the relationship between the sexes was seen, how people went on recuperative or cultural journeys, and how they coped with moving house and, finally, the uprooting of emigration. Again and again, too, we hear private echoes of major political events, such as the Hungarian revolution and counterrevolution of 1919; the Spartacist rebellion in Berlin in the same year; "Black Friday" on the New York Stock Exchange in 1929; the Prussian coup of 1932; a year later Hitler's seizure of power, followed by *Gleichschaltung* and persecution; the "wave of panic" (p. 848) at the spread of the Nazi movement in Austria; as well as, from 1936, disturbances, a general strike, and acts of terrorism in the Holy Land, unpacified as it already was.

On nearly every page, however, one also encounters that graciousness of social manners, now almost entirely lost, that must surely have been one of the preconditions for the invention of the psychoanalytic method of treatment. At any rate, no letter here remains unanswered. There is never a gift, a token of fond regard, that is not responded to with gratitude—for instance, when, in the virtual famine of the immediate postwar period, Eitingon's parents waited patiently at the Leipzig train station in the middle of the night to hand Freud and his wife, on their way from Berlin, "a basket full of charitable gifts" (p. 164), or when Freud commissioned at his own expense from the painter Max Pollak a copy of his etching of the Russian dancer Barbakoff, which Eitingon had seen in Freud's apartment in 1928 and had liked so much that he wanted to give it to his wife, Mirra, who was also Russian. Again and again, there were floral greetings: white lilacs from Freud for Eitingon's sister's wedding, and, often over great distances, gardenias, Freud's favorite flower, from the Eitingons, always gladly received.

However, the fact that the documents are presented in complete form not only enables them to deploy their full potential as material for a history of private life, but also allows the special char-

acter of this exchange of letters—which in many respects resembles a family correspondence—to emerge. As early as in December 1919, when he still addressed Eitingon as “Lieber Herr Doktor,” Freud noted: “You really are the most insouciant member of my family. You have already lent me 2000 marks, and my sister-in-law 1000. . . . You send food and working facilities (cigars) in quantities whose value we would rather not calculate, and even then you are not satisfied!” (pp. 175-176). When Eitingon as it were stood in for the parents, who had been prevented from traveling from Vienna to Hamburg because there were no trains, on the occasion of the funeral of Freud’s daughter Sophie after her sudden death in the influenza epidemic of the postwar years, Freud summed up his attitude at the beginning of February 1920: “After all these trials, I am surely entitled to call you my own” (p. 189). And from 4 July of the same year, as a token of quasi-familial intimacy, he addressed him as plain “Lieber Max,” unlike his custom with all his other male collaborators and pupils—for he did not usually use forenames except with a very small number of women, such as Lou Andreas-Salomé. Eitingon, for his part, persisted with “Lieber Herr Professor” to the end, always signing with his full name.

The family character of the epistolary exchange is also evident from the fact that both correspondents sometimes gave each other detailed information even about quite distant relations and the vicissitudes of their lives. Moreover, the childless Eitingon was solicitousness itself with regard to Freud’s children—in particular, his sons Oliver and Ernst. They lived in Berlin, sometimes for prolonged periods, in what was referred to as the “Hotel Eitingon.” He went to great pains to assist them in establishing themselves in their professions—for instance, helping Ernst to secure contracts for architectural and interior design work, initially even entrusting him with the design of his own apartment and of the Berlin Polyclinic. Freud aptly called this arrangement the “family branch” (for example, on p. 245). On more than one occasion, this concern for Freud’s actual and intellectual offspring overlapped—for instance, when Ernst and Mathilde attended the inaugural celebrations for the Berlin Polyclinic, “the most recent site of your work” (p. 190),

in February 1920, as a “family delegation” (p. 191); at this time, Freud himself called the Polyclinic “our youngest child” (p. 193).

– III –

Does the correspondence now published alter our image of Freud, add new features to it, bring ones with which we are already familiar into sharper focus or tone them down, and if so, to what extent? One’s principal impression can be summarized as follows: None of the collections of letters that have appeared hitherto tells us so much about the hardship, the excessive strain, the harshness, and indeed the banality of Freud’s everyday life.

This is true first and foremost of the extent of the pain and stress resulting from his cancer of the palate, diagnosed in 1923, the numerous operations, both major and minor, and the constant struggle, futile as it repeatedly turned out to be, to mitigate the intolerability of the clumsy prosthesis that was supposed to restore his ability to speak and to chew. Although the correspondence between Lou Andreas-Salomé and Anna Freud, published in 2001, revealed hitherto unknown details of his suffering through his daughter’s communications, these were, of course, indirect descriptions. It was evidently to Max Eitingon alone that Freud himself, tormented to a greater or lesser degree for the rest of his life and living substantially in enforced seclusion, expressed his feelings about his pain with such frequency and intensity, sometimes complaining and even querulous.

The later communications about his affliction may have been facilitated by the fact that, even before his cancer was diagnosed, he had occasionally written to Eitingon about his physical state, with unsparing observations about his aging and his allegedly declining productivity, and that these comments had met with an empathic and calming response from his solicitous medical correspondent. Eitingon had on his own initiative occasionally contacted Freud’s doctors directly; for instance, he had been informed of the malignant character of the palatine tumor in May 1923, at a time when the surgeon, Markus Hajek, still felt it incumbent on him to conceal it from Freud himself and his family.



In August 1924, after some initial attempts to get used to the monstrous prosthesis, Freud writes: "Eating, drinking, and speaking remain tasks to be accomplished with conscious strain. The disagreeable sensations are so many, and they change their location and quality so abundantly, that enough space persists behind them for gloomy fears, and they absorb me to such an extent that I retain only a fraction of interest in the day's impressions" (p. 353). "Since I can hear on one side only and am quite tired in the evenings, I can no longer chair meetings of the Society" (p. 354). And a few months later: "I have some tiring times behind me—incessant work on improving my prosthesis . . . the accompanying 'misery of rehabilitation,' the consumption of all freely mobile energy in organ cathexis, as demanded by the incredibly luxuriant paresthesias" (p. 394).

Ever and anew, we see Freud losing hope that he might after all one day succeed in overcoming at least the worst of the discomfort and irritation—"that I might again be able to associate with people without thinking more about that part of my jaw than about the person" (p. 516). In 1928, after deciding to have a new prosthesis made by the Berlin specialist Hermann Schröder, for which he had to undergo complex and intensive treatment, he reports: "I have now been living with it for six weeks. . . . The wicked torment has ceased, and I can chew better. But on the other hand my sad premonition has proved correct. It is so easy to forget what is past, whereas one cannot forget what is still there. The catarrh and swellings cause so many unpleasant sensations and make it so difficult to speak reliably that I cannot free myself from the annoying necessity of thinking about the prosthesis. It is the same psychological misery, albeit quite diluted and much more bearable. Probably no prosthesis could perform better. I suppose one ought not to outlive one's organ" (p. 614).

Referring to his beloved Heinrich Heine, he writes in October 1929: "Final judgment on such replacement body parts was pronounced by our great poet, although he probably had something different in mind. I mean the melancholy lines: '*Anfangs wollt' ich fast verzagen—und ich glaubt', ich trüg' es nie—und ich hab' es doch*'

*getragen—aber fragt mich nur nicht, wie*”<sup>5</sup> (p. 657). To his regret, his persistent speech impediment forced him to refuse an invitation to deliver the Huxley Lecture in London in 1931. Following many years of struggle with the prosthesis, albeit waged in the relative certainty that the cancer itself had been overcome, shortly afterward, the suspicion arose that some new polyplike protrusions in the oral mucosa might again be malignant. There followed a long series of minor operations and radium treatments. In March 1939, about six months before his death, Freud commented laconically from his exile in London: “A biopsy has revealed that this really is an attempt by the carcinoma to put itself in my place again.” That letter ends with the equally laconic sentence: “Apart from that, the German ‘Moses’ is expected in the next few days” (pp. 920-921).<sup>6</sup>

There are repeated allusions to his own work as an author, in which he also sought solace and refuge. What he had already noted in a letter to Sándor Ferenczi in 1912 had become even more true since the onset of his cancer: “I was miserable the whole time and deadened the pain by writing—writing—writing” (Freud and Ferenczi 1992, p. 314, translation modified). So, too, in the correspondence with Eitingon, we find many references to the registration of his creative process, which he could not force, but upon whose rhythms he had to wait patiently and more or less passively: “No seeds of work for the present” (p. 219); “a small renaissance of my capacity to work. . . . Both, ‘Humor’ and ‘Fetishism,’ came spontaneously as surprises” (p. 544). However, the correspondence is pervaded not only by indications of newly composed works, but also by constant references to new editions, revisions, or translations of ones already published—thus illustrating the absolute priority of the work.

Precisely this collection of letters tellingly illustrates the cost of the creation of an *oeuvre* of such a high order; this is another

<sup>5</sup> Translation: “At first I near lost heart, And felt I’d never bear it; But then I found I had endured—Just do not ask me how.”

<sup>6</sup> The reference is to the German-language original of *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), brought out by the Amsterdam publishing house of Allert de Lange, which catered to exiled German-language authors.

aspect of the hardship and excessive stress in the lives both of Freud himself and of those closest to him. The extensive and intensive exchange of ideas by the two correspondents about Freud's sons shows clearly for the first time the scale of the difficulties that confronted them, and not only in establishing themselves professionally. In the case of Ernst, Eitingon was concerned not only to help the young man earn a living, but also for his impaired physical health; he provided him with medical contacts and made it possible for him to undergo treatment at health resorts.

However, his greatest efforts were reserved for Oliver, who suffered from depressions and about whom Freud had written: "Oli's condition . . . has often been a cause of concern to me. I did not mention it before because I feel that you are burdened enough already in your new capacity as a member of the family and as branch manager. He needs active therapy" (p. 218). And, drawing a parallel between himself and this son, Freud writes: "But I'm in a serious mood, down in the dumps, in one of those swings that correspond in me to so-called depressions. You will not fail to recognize the connection if I continue on the subject of Oliver . . . for a long time he was my pride and my secret hope, until he then became my greatest worry" (p. 225). Eitingon did indeed initially undertake a kind of advice-based therapy in "a few fairly long conversations" (p. 220), Freud occasionally being informed of the progress of his efforts and having sight of the patient's letters to Eitingon and vice versa.

Finally, Eitingon provided for less contaminated analytic help by enlisting the young Franz Alexander, who admittedly worked under Eitingon's supervision. As previously in the letters exchanged between Freud and Ferenczi, in this correspondence, too, we encounter a blissful ignorance and heedlessness of the power of transference processes, together with well-meaning but risky transgressions of discretionary boundaries. It is, at any rate, no doubt legitimate to assume that, notwithstanding the abundantly documented solicitousness of Freud for his family, his son's difficulties betray some traces of paternal psychic absence. Freud's unconditional subordination to his *oeuvre* was expressed differently in his

relationship with his youngest daughter, Anna—namely, in an excessive paternal presence, whereby she was ultimately designated as the continuator of his work. As late as 1921, when she was in her mid-twenties, Freud wrote to Eitingon, clearly demonstrating his awareness of the binding, constricting nature of this specific father–daughter relationship: “Anna, by the way, is in excellent form; she is cheerful, industrious, and animated. I should be just as pleased to keep her at home as to see her in a home of her own. If only it is all the same to her too!” (p. 252).

Even with regard to quite marginal administrative collaborators, all that counted was their performance in relation to the work —“the cause.” For instance, there is the following comment, which seems almost in the nature of a defense, about Adolf Josef Storfer, who ran the *Verlag* for a while and whose work attracted keen criticism, not least from Eitingon himself: “He has after all put together the collected edition, is now compiling the index, and is for all his follies a valuable *instrument*”<sup>7</sup> (p. 618). Conversely, Freud’s reaction in 1921 to the departure of the then secretary of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Association, Hans Liebermann, who was manifestly in the throes of a severe personal crisis, was if anything on the harsh side, whereas Eitingon was more inclined to make allowances: “In the Liebermann affair, although I felt able to approve your position, I could not see . . . precautions being taken to ensure that no harm was done to the cause. He could after all have been gently relieved of the responsibilities he had discharged so badly. In that respect I would be intolerant. *Navigare necesse est, vivere (also vivum servare) non necesse*”<sup>8</sup> (p. 246).

The Freud–Eitingon correspondence proves to be an indispensable source for understanding the break with Otto Rank and the profound, tragic alienation from Sándor Ferenczi. It contains

<sup>7</sup> The emphasis here is mine. The reference is to Freud’s first quasi-collected edition, the *Gesammelte Schriften*, which ultimately amounted to twelve volumes. An index was never published.

<sup>8</sup> Translation: “It is necessary to sail the seas, it is not necessary to live (and also to save life).” These words, quoted elsewhere by Freud (1915) as the “motto of the Hanseatic League” (p. 291), are used here to defend the priority of the work, the “cause.”

many details of ambivalent reactions to the two publications that appeared in German in 1924—Rank's *Das Trauma der Geburt* (*The Trauma of Birth* [1929]) and the joint work of Ferenczi and Rank, *Entwicklungsziele der Psychoanalyse* (*The Development of Psychoanalysis* [1925])—in the former of which the trauma etiology returns in a different guise, while in the latter drastic innovations in therapeutic technique are proposed. Whereas Freud initially received both books benignly, he subsequently found in Rank's case that he had begun to abandon the common ground. However much store he had always set by Rank's immense and multifarious services, performed for a pittance over a period of many years, after the break he immediately enforced a rigorous new order, not least in relation to the *Verlag* and the editing of its journals. He reacted with similar brusqueness, and indeed with to some extent exaggerated frigidity, to the reviviscence of the trauma etiology in Ferenczi's innovative texts of the early 1930s.

Freud seems to have been constantly on the alert to the potential dangers of innovations—not for reasons of conservatism or narcissistic bias, but because he was only too aware, partly from his own self-experience, of the temptation to evade the hypercomplexity, “unnaturalness,” and consuming effort of genuinely psychoanalytic thinking and genuinely psychoanalytic clinical work. If he felt the foundations of his work to be threatened or, in a word, feared a regression on the level of either theory or therapeutic technique—back to a stage before the Oedipus complex, unconscious psychic reality, and free association—even decades of intimate friendship would count for nothing. Freud was then all too promptly inclined to pathologize the other if he took a different view. As we know, it was only after Ferenczi's death, in his own late works and in particular in the Moses book (Grubrich-Simitis 1988, 1996), that Freud was able, at least indirectly, to resume his dialogue with his erstwhile colleague, whom he actually held in high esteem to the end, and to arrive at a new conception that took full account of the pathogenic weight of individual early traumas and complemented the notion of an etiology of the neuroses based purely on conflict theory.

As it happens, the correspondence also documents a number of other breakaway movements, all facets of which are portrayed in great detail. Already in a letter of June 1927, Freud had in fact described a specific cause of distancing, controversy, and secession in the following terms: "Normally the teacher hands down to the pupil 95% of the science and adds 5% of his own, but in this case the pupils have had to get 95% of their science from me. That is difficult to bear; it provides more material and stronger reasons for ingratitude" (p. 519).

Precisely because the correspondence is comparatively poor in deep-going dialogues on matters of content extending over fairly long passages, one aspect of Freud's genius ultimately emerges with unique clarity—namely, his stupendously realistic assessment of what needed to be done to ensure that his work, which, after all, lacked the support of and links to the academic world, would be continued and gain acceptance, and indefatigably to apply these insights over many years and decades on the practical, political, and concrete level. In other words, it was a matter of establishing and maintaining institutions—psychoanalytic associations, institutes, outpatient clinics, polyclinics—at which psychoanalysis would be taught, patients would receive treatment, and psychoanalysts would meet for the purposes of research and, on a limited scale, disseminate psychoanalysis among the public. It would be necessary to hold regular congresses, at which the widely dispersed psychoanalytic community could come together for identity-consolidating exchanges.

In particular, however, no sacrifice was too great for him when the life of the *Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag*, the independent publishing house founded in 1919, together with its English-language offshoot, was at stake: "For the *Verlag* seems to me to be the most important organ of our movement, even more vital than the polyclinics" (p. 311). This was not only because it provided his collaborators and pupils with an easily accessible publication forum, or because the psychoanalytic journals in particular made for rapid international scientific exchanges, but also because Freud, as one of the twentieth century's great discourse

originators, knew very well that it was only through the subversive and highly effective medium of the book that psychoanalytic thought and its concepts could successfully gain entry into culture at large.

The Freud–Eitingon correspondence is certainly one of the principal sources for researching the history of the *Verlag*, and indeed of the general history of publishing houses in the first half of the century. The reader can observe Freud pulling all the strings himself, almost as if he were a professional publisher, to rescue his favorite firm from several near bankruptcies—by changing his staff policy, engaging new editorial personnel, assuming financial guarantees, or conducting audits (quite a few of the letters contain columns of figures and precise details of salaries, cost estimates for books, and the like), contracting loans, drafting appeals for funds to members of component societies, or planning and writing new books likely to achieve substantial sales, such as the *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1933a), written solely for that purpose, and the study of President Woodrow Wilson, conducted jointly with William C. Bullitt. Since Freud refrained from drawing the royalties on his own works in spite of his family’s penury, but plowed them back into the business year after year, thus enabling the *Verlag* to operate with these considerable sums, he was in any case its “main creditor” (p. 627).

Behind the scenes, then, we learn of the hardship, financial pressures, and banality of Freud’s rigid everyday working life—but also perceive his matchless perseverance in battling against all these repugnant aspects of reality. In a long letter of May 1920, ranging over such subjects as the organization of a congress, the best country for depositing the capital of an American fund, *Verlag* salaries, the Berlin Policlinic, and, finally, a grant toward the cost of printing Georg Groddeck’s *Seelensucher* (“The Soul Seeker”), he writes: “Enough of money, business, and worries! But that’s what science looks like in the cold light of day.” He ends on the following ironic but cheerful note: “I am now correcting and completing the ‘Beyond’—namely, that of the Pleasure Principle—and am once again in a productive phase” (p. 207).

## – IV –

In running the wide-ranging enterprise of psychoanalysis, Max Eitingon, in all his functions of administration, organization, and benefaction, was, so to speak, Sigmund Freud's right-hand man and executive alter ego, particularly since the onset of his illness. There was, one might say, nothing that Eitingon would not have done for Freud, even beyond his official duties, and, as he himself once put it, "even beyond my own pleasure principle" (p. 617). For instance, he conducted the merger negotiations with the Springer publishing house (which ultimately came to naught), assessed a production supervisor from the Insel publishing house of Leipzig for his suitability for the post of technical manager, and, at Freud's instigation, helped the "Wolf Man," who had lost his fortune in consequence of the Russian Revolution, to sell a grandfather clock, and also gave him personal financial assistance. Eitingon seems to have taken care of all these matters not only highly effectively and decisively, but also discreetly, unobtrusively, circumspectly, and with absolute reliability.

In addition, he displayed that integrative capacity that was manifestly so rare in Freud's circle: in many conflicts between its members—Karl Abraham and Otto Rank, Otto Rank and Ernest Jones, Ernest Jones and Sándor Ferenczi, and so on—he deployed his considerable powers of diplomatic mediation, even between Jones and Freud himself. After Hitler's seizure of power, when confronted with the pressure to conform (*Gleichschaltung*) applied to the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute, he proved to be an immensely better judge of human nature than Freud in regard to the susceptibility of his German colleagues, and displayed political acuity in relation to the counterproductive effect of any attempt to fall into line, because that would inevitably lead to the "putrefaction" (p. 849) of the institute. Nor should it be forgotten that, in the period immediately before his own departure into exile, Eitingon acted, as he himself called it, as an "emigration bureau" (p. 855)—that is to say, he did all he could to support persecuted Jewish colleagues in their preparations for escape.



In reading the letters, one might gain the impression that these rare character traits—selflessness, probity, unconditional helpfulness, and personal courage, for once considered as such and not as reaction formations—were favored by the manifestly substantial absence of powerful creative ambitions of his own. We are ignorant of the actual inner situation. In a letter written before his cancer was diagnosed, in which Freud notes that he has allowed Eitingon “to shower every kind of help” upon him, whereas he (Freud) has “imposed every kind of task” on him (Eitingon), Freud sums up as follows: “So I suppose things will always have to stay as they have been so far, with me needing something and you taking the trouble to procure it for me. It is your own freely chosen fate, for which I . . . pitied you. But the ambulatory analysis<sup>9</sup> has taught me the conditions of your love, from which it did not prove possible to free you” (pp. 273-274). Note here the clear, if subdued, contradiction—because that “training analysis” had, after all, manifestly failed to enable Eitingon genuinely to choose his fate for himself, that is, to shake off his burden, if indeed he experienced it as such.

At times, we encounter unexpected, irritating, and at first sight incomprehensible statements and reactions that seem to be connected, directly or indirectly, with the countless personal examples of Eitingon’s generosity—in particular, on the financial level—and with the feelings with which Freud and his family reacted to these gifts. For instance, a laconic New Year’s greeting by Freud, dating from the first day of 1922, ends for no apparent reason with the sentence: “This year again, do not move further away from all of us!” (p. 272). Eitingon’s almost shocked reaction, which reverberates in the subsequent exchange of letters in alternate protestations of affection and reassurance, is: “To remain as close to you as has increasingly been granted to me in the last few years, to be allowed to remain as close as that, was one of the few wishes for myself with which I embarked on the New Year, if

<sup>9</sup> This is an allusion to the brief “training analysis,” conducted while the two men were out walking, mentioned earlier in this essay.

something that is simply a vital necessity for me—anything else would be inconceivable—can still be called a wish. How could I ever move further away from you!” (p. 272).

Freud always felt more free to express his thanks for small gifts, “which I still find easier to enjoy than your big ones” (p. 285); for many years, he was able to accept Eitingon’s generous provision of cigars with a comparative lack of ambivalence, even if here, too, he repeatedly urged Eitingon to let him pay for them himself. On one occasion, shortly after the end of the war, in December 1919, Eitingon had spontaneously ordered a sum of money to be remitted to Freud for his personal use. Invoking among other things the utter indignation of his wife and his youngest daughter, Anna—who, for her part, had manifestly been unable to tolerate “the destruction of her father complex” (p. 175)—Freud insisted by return post that the remittance be canceled.

However, what is most disconcerting to the reader is Freud’s reaction to the threat posed by the world economic crisis to Eitingon’s family firm, and its partial collapse—that is, to the dwindling of the resources that Max Eitingon had provided year after year for the funding or partial funding of the psychoanalytic institutions, the Polyclinic, the *Verlag*—and, of course, also the occasional support of Freud’s family, both close and extended, not to mention the maintenance of his own grand bourgeois lifestyle. When, in February 1932, at the end of a letter filled with concerns about the *Verlag* and editorial matters, Eitingon includes a restrained reference to his family’s financial worries, remarking that “what had been a secure reserve for us to fall back on has now largely disappeared, and what remains is already more than questionable” (p. 786), Freud responds only briefly to this news in his reply, even though Eitingon had informed him that his family had been stricken by something “like an avalanche.”

This crisis admittedly coincided with a fresh threat of bankruptcy for the *Verlag*, this time particularly dramatic. Anna Freud had characterized the calamitous situation as follows: “It almost seems that the *Verlag* is a patient whom Storfer has up to now drugged with narcotics to disguise his troubles. If he is deprived

of these expedients by a more honest method of treatment, the fear is that he will suddenly feel his pain and succumb all the more quickly to the existing organic disease" (p. 768n). This coincidence may explain Freud's oddly distanced, even reproachful-sounding expression of regret: "What you write about the state of your firm of course touches me to the quick. Apart from the personal aspect, it was after all our last hope that if the worst came to the worst your puissant cousin would, upon a nod from you, pour out his horn of plenty over us. It would surely have not meant very much to him at the time, but we did not have the slightest claim to his interest, and you too will have had good reasons to refrain from giving this nod" (p. 788).

At about this time, Freud had again suddenly taken full charge of all matters. He finally modified the structure of the *Verlag*, transferred its management to his son Martin, who was then once more unemployed, and transferred the editorial offices of the *Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* and *Imago* from Berlin back to Vienna, thus inevitably bringing about an appreciable reduction in Eitingon's influence. When, owing to a misunderstanding, Freud believed Eitingon to be in an acute state of personal financial embarrassment, he informed him that he could "comfortably place, for example, \$1000 at [his] disposal" (p. 796)—an offer that Eitingon passed over in silence, and for which Freud in effect apologized shortly afterward.

About six months later, in a letter reporting on "Why war?" (1933b), his reply in the epistolary dialogue with Albert Einstein instigated by the Permanent Committee for Literature and the Arts of the League of Nations, there occurred a parapraxis which, although he noticed it, he did not suppress, as otherwise, he would have had to rewrite the letter: "The 'Lectures'<sup>10</sup> are ready, but so is the tedious and sterile so-called discussion with [deleted: Eitingon] Einstein (I hope you will find nothing disparaging in this substitution!)" (p. 831)—convinced as he manifestly was that Eitingon would not relate the substitution to the part of the sentence *preceding* the name.

<sup>10</sup> He is referring to the *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1933a).

Finally, the documentary appendix to the edition includes a late letter from Freud to Arnold Zweig, who had also emigrated to Palestine and made friends with Eitingon there. This letter of 10 February 1937 came to Eitingon's attention only after Freud's death, when, as a favor to Anna Freud, he was helping to sort through the letters from her father that were in the possession of Zweig, whose eyesight had become very poor. Freud here makes the oddly monosyllabic comment about Eitingon that, although they had known each other for thirty years, he did not yet know very much about him; there were "indications of excessive goodness, of not quite successful compensation." He also says that Eitingon "got on badly with people" and reaped little thanks. The letter ends with a fierce attack on Eitingon's wife, whom Freud did not like and whom he accused of being uninterested in psychoanalysis: "She is very jealous of all that, because it disturbs her exclusive possession of his person. I do not know if he means more to her than the porter who gives her access to every imaginable stupid luxury" (p. 977).

How are we to understand these passages of irritation if we are disinclined to rest content with the trite explanation that Freud had been interested in Max Eitingon mainly as a benefactor, and more or less had dropped him once his family fortune seemed lost? Nor does it suffice to accept the generalizing interpretation given in passing in a letter of 8 February 1931, where Freud comments on a collection organized by Eitingon on the occasion of his seventy-fifth birthday, again in order to save the *Verlag*, on account of which Freud, although wishing to avoid the official celebration, had to make himself available willy-nilly for the presentation in Vienna: "It is of course quite inappropriate to accept a gift and then to refuse to be present personally when it is handed over. That would be tantamount to saying: You have brought me something? Well, just put it down somewhere, and I'll fetch it some time. *The aggression alloyed with the donor's affection demands its satisfaction*,"<sup>11</sup> the recipient of the gift must allow himself to be stirred

<sup>11</sup> The emphasis here has been added.

up, annoyed, and embarrassed. Feeble old people who on such occasions discover to their surprise how greatly they are appreciated by their younger contemporaries are then commonly overcome by the plethora of feelings and tend to succumb fairly promptly to the aftereffects" (p. 713).

The powerful dynamic betrayed by certain passages from the letters dating in particular from the first half of 1932, which did indeed lead to a barely perceptible temporary cooling of relations and, for Eitingon, to an increment in independence, can be more readily understood if it is recalled that one of the traumatic circumstances that overshadowed Freud's childhood and youth after the departure from Freiberg and the breakup of his extended family was grinding poverty. His father had never again—either in Leipzig or in Vienna—been able to provide for his family with any degree of stability. This led, until well into Freud's student and training years, to various necessarily humiliating dependency situations. These are hinted at, for example, in the Fliess letters. For instance, he writes to his friend on 21 September 1899, shortly before the publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900): "My mood also depends very strongly on my earnings. Money is laughing gas for me. I know from my youth that once the wild horses of the pampas have been lassoed, they retain a certain anxiousness for life. Thus I came to know the helplessness of poverty and continually fear it" (Freud 1985, p. 374).

The word *helpless* may not least echo the absence of a father representation affording protection, strength, and independence, as well as, no doubt, a safeguard against the threat of psychic regression, and behind it the quest, replete with longing, for such a figure. Yet this quest was again and again doomed to failure owing to Freud's extreme intolerance of dependence. Earlier, this tragic paradox may have played a part in his otherwise incomprehensible abrupt alienation from Josef Breuer, a similarly helpful and noble personage and the generous—both materially and in other respects—mentor of his youth, who must therefore inevitably also have been experienced as both aggressive and affectionate.

In a letter of 15 June 1920—the last before he began to address Eitingon as “Lieber Max”—while emphatically thanking him for all his diverse support of his sons Ernst and Oliver, Freud uses a telling phrase in which that traumatic early experience of poverty seemingly resonates: he writes that he can only confess to him “since I have been able better to recognize the scale and breadth of your affectionate care *that through your help I have come to feel stronger and more secure in my life*”<sup>12</sup> (p. 208). This is certainly not meant only in the sense of a “sonhood” (p. 274) of Eitingon, as Freud had then called their relationship, but rather in that of a paternality which relieved him of a burden, protected him, and supported him in every way. If this assumption is correct, the sudden disappearance of Eitingon’s fortune might have abruptly aroused echoes of the traumatic memory of that “helpless” poverty and abandonment by the father, preconsciously unleashing archaic paniclike feelings, which might then in turn be held responsible for Freud’s oddly distanced, defensive reply. In the letters dating from the spring of 1932, there are indeed signs of “something . . . that in anyone else might readily have turned into a depression” (p. 802).

I hope the reader will allow me this attempt to interpret these irritating passages from the correspondence; after all, Freud’s letters, while admittedly not free associations, are nevertheless private, authentic texts of their protagonist.

– V –

And who was the other protagonist, Max Eitingon? The fact that we now know more about him than we could ever have hoped to is due, as already emphasized, not least to the decision to publish his correspondence in full. For these hundreds of letters are surely the most significant written testimony he left to posterity. There is considerable evidence that intense publication pressure reigned in the group of Freud’s early collaborators: to count for anything, it seems that one had to publish. For instance, Freud wrote to

<sup>12</sup> The emphasis here has been added.

Eitingon in October 1919 that, to his pleasure, Karl Abraham had now also agreed to Eitingon's membership of the Committee: "In view of our personal relationship and my sense of obligation in so many respects, I had long wished to have you among us, but it was only your independent creation of a Polyclinic in Berlin that made it possible for me to propose you" (p. 167).

We do not know why Eitingon published so little. He was, after all, as Freud put it late on—on the occasion of Eitingon's fiftieth birthday in 1930, in a text not published at the time—"thoroughly versed in psychoanalysis, an experienced therapist and a thinker of certain judgment" (Grubrich-Simitis 1996, p. 229). It is true that Eitingon himself sometimes mentions a "writing inhibition" (p. 168) or an "inability to write" (p. 337), and also doubts that a text from his pen would at all be worth "the printer's ink" (p. 695). Freud several times expresses his regret that he did not publish more; and when he did, his praise is unstinting—for example, characteristically, on reading Eitingon's (1933) fine and fair obituary of Sándor Ferenczi, which did justice to the status of its subject while at the same time displaying fondness and narrative skill: "Your obituary for Ferenczi pleased me enormously. It is a pity that you write so rarely if the result can be as good as this" (p. 863). Or: "You seldom produced anything, but when you did, it had strength and character" (p. 905). Or again: "Once again I am surprised that you do not take up the pen as a tool and weapon more often. You plainly understand the art of subtle and effective writing" (p. 624).

Indeed, many passages in the letters demonstrate that Eitingon in no way lacked a gift for observation and that he had a way with words. For instance, about the weather on a vacation trip, he writes: "Since then it has been raining—raining with tranquil, rabid thoroughness" (p. 226); and, on Freud's favorite grandson, whom he had visited in Hamburg: "I was particularly attracted by Heinerle; he is a quite irresistible little fellow, a mixture of droll roguishness and triumphant trustfulness" (pp. 284-285); and in his characterizations of colleagues, such as, for example, Groddeck: "Because I did not know him personally very well before, I was

quite pleasantly surprised to discover how shy this impudent wretch is in reality" (p. 608), and about René Laforgue: "He is very busy setting up a gigantic institute for delinquent children, with the aim of restoring his tarnished halo to its former radiance. He is a singularly enterprising maker of projects!" (p. 667), and, surprisingly, about Abraham: "Here is another example of Abraham's way of seeing situations: since his vision is manifestly not clouded by many affects aside from his peculiarly tempered amour-propre, but since on the other hand these do not cause him to look into things with excessive attention and zeal, what he sees is at first something correct" (p. 421).

The image of Eitingon suggested by many indications in the letters is of a clinician working away carefully and in silence, with the benefit, precisely, of this sensitive perspicacity. In 1907, after all, he had sought contact with Freud in connection with a patient—a young Russian female student of philosophy—for a consultation, or perhaps with a view to referring her to Freud. Exchanges of opinion on patients, mutual referrals, detailed discussion of clinical issues and therapeutic theory, parameters, fee levels, and so on are regularly recurring elements of the correspondence over the years.

Upon Eitingon's first visit as a student from Burghölzli, Freud had invited him to attend a meeting of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society in his apartment and, if he wished, to ask questions. Eitingon came up with three questions, the second of which, significantly, ran: "What is the therapy directed against and how is it conducted?" (p. 935). Eitingon had recorded this meeting in notes that he kept for the rest of his life; in exile in Palestine, he used them in a speech, reproduced in the appendix to the edition of the letters, marking Freud's birthday on 6 May 1937. In it, he reports Freud's answers to his second question verbatim. Here are just a few extracts from this extraordinary document: "And now Freud pronounced those remarkable words that pass so apocryphally through the analytical ranks and have so often been debased in the mouths of those who have used them: 'The secret of our activity is that healing is healing through love.' The



substitution of complexes is not of course the aim. The success of the resolution through transference decides the outcome of the treatment. The imperfection of the technique is the only significant point. . . . The reasons for illness are a particularly important element and may *present new barriers to a successful therapy*. And then, finally, came one of those pronouncements of Freud's that ought to be engraved on the secret stone tablets<sup>13</sup> of analysis: 'By supreme *personal* effort it might perhaps be possible to overcome these barriers, but it would be at the cost of one's own skin.' Over the ensuing decades, Freud, in conversation, often came up with variations on this formulation: 'More can be achieved in the treatment, but then one would have to cut strips out of one's own skin'" (p. 938).

Here, in characterizing the analyst-patient relationship, Freud as it were formulated the unofficial, interpersonal antimetaphor to his official, highly distanced image as a surgeon or mirror. It is conceivable that Eitingon was more inclined than Freud—who, after all, was fascinated primarily by scientific work and writing—to take upon himself, on occasion, the paradoxical burden conceptualized in this radical figure. One reason for his profound appreciation of Ferenczi's clinical passion in the obituary mentioned earlier may have been that he felt an affinity with him in this respect, "because he was so much concerned with healing, with acting, with effecting change as a criterion of correct thinking, with bringing about the disappearance of the pathological manifestation as, so to speak, a negative phenomenon of the materialization of truth" (Eitingon 1933, p. 294).

At any rate, the correspondence contains many indications of the great store Eitingon set by clinical work for its own sake, throughout his life, and of how reliably he placed himself at his patients' disposal, even while on his occasionally prolonged travels—when he would sometimes take patients with him, as was custo-

<sup>13</sup> At this time, it will be recalled, Eitingon was corresponding with Freud from Jerusalem about *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), then in the course of composition.

mary at the time. What occasionally caused him difficulty, precisely because of this unconditional devotion, were threats to the success of the treatment, due, say, to the gain from illness. For instance, as early as in 1920, he comments as follows on an analysis just commenced: "Even so, the case does not seem to me to be very easy at all, partly because of that insidious little question: what's the point of getting well?" (p. 186). The same emerges even more clearly from a letter of April 1922: "At a completely different juncture in the analysis, the condition of love which you mention<sup>14</sup> caused me difficulties: I still find it hard to bear if I fail to achieve the appropriate success, or have only minimal success, in therapy—that is, mark you, in severe cases" (p. 281). Freud ends his reply to this complaint, which he did not share, with the astonishing sentence: "On the whole, of course, no therapy is very gratifying, not even ours. For every therapy contains something that strives to oppose determinism" (p. 283).

There may also have been other reasons for Eitingon's abstinence from publication despite the manifestly considerable volume of his clinical work. With his flair for discretion, and in view of the extremely intimate nature of the clinical material generated in the treatment situation, the unavoidable disclosure—at least of extracts from such material—in the publication of case histories may have seemed to him like a breach of confidence, a betrayal of his patients. So perhaps he eschewed that "trace of . . . criminality" (Freud and Pfister 1963, p. 38, translation modified) without which a psychoanalytic case history cannot be written.

Eitingon may also have realized how much more openly he could listen, concentrating on his patient alone without preconceptions or preconditions, if incipient theoretical ideas of his own, connected with the preparation of a clinical publication and quite likely having nothing to do with the patient in question, were not superimposed on the patient's communications—like a grid

<sup>14</sup> See p. 960 of this essay. The reference is presumably to the "excessive goodness," in the sense of "not quite successful compensation," diagnosed by Freud in the late letter to Arnold Zweig (p. 977); see also p. 963 of this essay.

through which elements tending to corroborate or illustrate these schemata penetrated preferentially into the analyst's perceptual and interpretive horizon. Max Eitingon was probably one of the first in the now surely extensive ranks of those silent, deserving, invisible psychoanalysts who derive satisfaction from good clinical work with patients as such, in full awareness of transience.

In view of this intense clinical interest, it is hardly surprising that another focal point of Eitingon's work, as outlined at the beginning of this essay, was training—the teaching of psychoanalysis. It was not only in the interests of patients that he fought with unyielding rigor for the thoroughness and systematization of this training; he had probably also learned lessons from his own experience, which was quite typical of the pioneer generation, of an at-most fragmentary “training analysis” and of being forced to resort to constant individual study of the psychoanalytic literature. From about 1923 on, the letters contain repeated discussions of training issues, such as the conditions for candidates' admission and lay analysis. Some of the rules developed in dialogue with Freud at this time have remained valid to this day.

For instance, the reader of this correspondence can witness the very birth of the chronological order of our classical three pillars. In a letter of March 1923, Eitingon refers to a commission appointed at the Berlin Institute “to specify the ‘how’ of the training syllabus,” and consults Freud on the question of the “stage in the training at which the training analysis should be placed. It always seemed to me more logical to put it in the second part and to precede it with a preliminary theoretical stage comprising lectures and a thorough reading of our literature. After all, if a trainee comes to us without any prior knowledge of analytic matters, he ought to have some notion of what he has decided to embark on before commencing the ‘passive analysis.’ The resistances resulting from this prior knowledge are, after all, usually not very different from other resistances. . . . The third phase that follows here is active analysis at the Polyclinic under our direction” (pp. 324-325).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> This is, of course, a reference to the “control analyses” established for the first time at the Berlin Polyclinic. In the printed training program, Eitingon consis-

Freud's decisive answer, which still holds good today, was:

If a period of theoretical tuition, which must after all last 5-6 months, comes first, the candidate will readily take this as a sign that the main emphasis falls on intellectual instruction, will take less interest in the odious autoanalysis,<sup>16</sup> and will remain convinced, whatever the result of this analysis, that he has learned psychoanalysis. And that is of course undesirable. Furthermore, by adopting this sequence, one deprives oneself of the possibility of sifting the material. If someone has completed the course and then proves, in the self-analysis, to be a helpless neurotic or a dubious character, it will be difficult to send him away as unsuitable and to answer his question: why did you let me waste half a year on theoretical studies that are of no use to me now? It is a matter of experience, and perfectly natural, that so many pathological individuals press to practice psychoanalysis, and so any act that makes selection harder should be avoided. The way we do it here is to begin with the candidate's own analysis, and then, if it is going well and does not deter the candidate, to allow him, while it is proceeding, to attend lectures and to read books. On several occasions we have had the successful outcome that the analysand dropped his mask, gave up his claim to an analytic future, and declared himself to be an ordinary patient. Your view that the candidate has a right to learn what is expected of him could be allowed for by preceding the candidate's own analysis with a short course of preliminary lectures lasting, say, a week. As it happens, very few indeed of those applying for training are in need of such an introduction. They mostly bring with them a great deal of preparation of their own—which is undesirable. [pp. 326-327]

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tently appears as the person responsible for this part of the curriculum, right up to 1933, the year of his emigration.

<sup>16</sup> Significantly, nowhere in this letter does Freud use the term "training analysis" (*Lehranalyse*), but alternates between "autoanalysis" (*Autoanalyse*), "self-analysis" (*Selbstanalyse*), and "the candidate's own analysis" (*Eigenanalyse*)—variants perhaps reminiscent of his own path toward psychoanalysis.

In accordance with his aspiration to secure international recognition for and enforcement of the high standard of training at the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute, Eitingon must surely have set particular store by the International Training Commission which he had inaugurated and which remained in his charge until his death in 1943.

Max Eitingon continued as an indefatigable clinician and teacher of psychoanalysis to the end of his life in Palestine, as is vividly documented in the correspondence, although in the final years, the intervals between the letters become longer and more irregular. In one of the very last letters, on 7 May 1939, he informs Freud of a successful commemorative meeting "at our Institute on the occasion of your birthday," which included a detailed presentation and thorough discussion of the Moses book. Full of pride and confidence for the future, he mentions that the presenter, a young, "very serious and very intelligent" colleague, has been "fully trained" by himself; in him, "our movement has acquired an uncommonly valuable member" (pp. 925-926).

So Eitingon literally lived for Freud's work, for psychoanalysis. What, then, might Freud have meant in the late letter to Arnold Zweig, mentioned earlier, when he remarked, despite all this, that Eitingon "has been my faithful disciple for so long, but I still do not know very much about him" (p. 977)? Perhaps this relates to a concealed area of Eitingon's life and personality, barely discernible in specific terms, but nevertheless perceptible in the letters, and in particular to an element of independence that Freud could not readily tolerate, and that was granted to Eitingon not only by virtue of his wealth, but also by his broadly based education and wide-ranging cultural interests, as demonstrated by his manifestly legendary library. We thus learn little from the letters about what he did on his many trips, preferentially around the Mediterranean, which often lasted many weeks or even months. Occasional brief descriptions reveal his capacity to be enthralled by the splendor of grand landscapes, the mood of the seasons, or the expressiveness of cultural monuments. A picture postcard from Naples, at any rate, showed Freud that the inner connection had not been bro-

ken off: "How right you are to use Pompeii as a psychoanalytic simile!" (p. 62).

There are indications that Eitingon was bothered by the narrow-mindedness of some of his Berlin colleagues. He therefore liked to seek and entertain contacts and friendships outside the profession. We learn in passing something of meetings with Luigi Pirandello, who lived in Berlin for a while at the end of the 1920s, with the family of Albert Einstein, with the singer Nadezhda Plevitskaya and other musicians and actors, as well as, in particular, with the Russian philosopher Lev Shestov, whom he had long revered and with whom he had become friends after the two men met in Paris in 1922. When he tried to interest Freud in Shestov's work in 1928, he earned a rude and as usual radically antiphilosophical rebuff: "You probably cannot imagine how outlandish all these philosophical contortions appear to me. One of the greatest satisfactions of my life is that I have no part in these lamentable squanderings of the human power of thought" (p. 601). Eitingon, who simply ignored Freud's outburst, did not in the least allow himself to be prevented from persisting unswervingly in his appreciation of Shestov. On another occasion, in November 1910, he was more fortunate in directing Freud's attention to another Russian author whom he admired, by presenting him with the then available volumes of the Piper German edition of Dostoevsky: This seed was to germinate nearly twenty years later in "Dostoevsky and Parricide" (1928).

One final sphere in which the two men were particularly close to each other should be mentioned. On 1 October 1913, Eitingon was able to pronounce to Freud "the old Jewish New Year salutation *leshana tova*, with which you once, many years ago, closed one of our congresses" (p. 85). Here, however, the two men also differed from each other: Eitingon's profound rootedness in Judaism, nurtured by long years of Zionist inclinations in his family, seems to have been much more traditional than that of Freud, who described himself as "unbelieving" (p. 189). This was manifested not least in Eitingon's very conscious choice of the Holy Land for his exile; early on in the correspondence, he had al-

ready emphasized that he had read Theodor Reik's (1919) "very fine contributions on the *kol nidrei* and the *shofar*"—evidently immediately upon their publication—"with truly burning interest" (p. 174).

Precisely because, owing both to his abstinence from publication and to his great discretion, Eitingon has on the whole failed to emerge as a clearly delineated individual and scientific figure—notwithstanding the comparatively intimate testimony of the correspondence now placed before us—he may be regarded, in abstract terms, as the representative *in nuce* of these classical decades in the history of psychoanalysis. His inconspicuous background contributions to its shaping and configuration are indeed unrivaled. Moreover, it is perhaps surprising how many of the topics and issues that then confronted him have either lost none of their relevance today, or anticipated developments that are actually characteristic of subsequent decades, up to the present time. These include fundamental positions in the later Freud–Klein controversy; intra-analytic opposition, initially encouraged by Ernest Jones, to lay analysis, with which Freud aspired "to arouse a sense of analytic solidarity to be set against the caste feeling of the doctors" (p. 596); the consequent increasing medicalization of psychoanalysis and the threat of the loss of its cultural dimension and of its potential to contribute to the theory of culture; skepticism about the widespread tendency to omnipotence in analytic circles, as when Freud responds to attempts to apply it in the science of criminalistics by warning: "Analysis, which cannot explain everything and cannot influence everything it explains, and from which there is no direct path to practical measures, has reason to take the stage more modestly" (p. 614); misgivings about the assumption of senior functions by psychoanalysts in other professional societies; the relative independence of the creative French contributions to psychoanalysis from Anglo-American productions; and schismatic tendencies within the International Psychoanalytical Association.

A late project dating from 1932, shortly before Hitler's seizure of power and reflecting a premonition of what was to come, seems particularly relevant from this point of view: Eitingon informed

Freud that, in the evenings, he had now once again taken up “an old occupation—namely, outlining the history of our movement in my own way, or doing preliminary work on the compilation of such a history. And then it occurred to me to ask you to let me have sight of your correspondence with Abraham” (p. 842).<sup>17</sup> Freud acceded to this request, sent Eitingon Abraham’s letters, and granted permission for him to consult his own letters to Abraham, which had been preserved by Abraham’s widow. As to the project itself, the editor of the Freud–Eitingon correspondence, Michael Schröter, tells us that the said history was never published. Nor, as far as we know at present, does Eitingon’s estate include any such manuscripts. In a nutshell, this history of psychoanalysis may be said to have been written in the Freud–Eitingon letters themselves and, in particular, in the excellent, monumental editorial apparatus with which Michael Schröter has endowed them.

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## CATEGORIES AS SYMPTOMS: CONCEPTIONS OF LOVE IN THE PSYCHOANALYTIC RELATIONSHIP

BY GILBERT W. COLE, PH.D., L.C.S.W.

*An invitation to participate in a conference, especially the phrase, "we hope that your [contribution] might deal with same-sex love," reveals the persistent, lingering effects of the creation of the categories homosexual and heterosexual. Analysis of the phrase suggests a fantasy condensed in the invitation: that a gay psychoanalyst loves and works differently than his heterosexual colleagues and that this difference is determined by his sexual orientation. Approaching the creation of these categories as a symptom of a process of repudiation and projection, the author seeks to begin identifying and sorting through the projected psychic contents that keep these categories' specious effects alive.*

Last March, I received this e-mail:

Hey Gilbert—

—it began, and briskly described the conference's theme, the title of the panel, and culminated in an invitation:

We would very much like you to be a panelist. There will be 3, each giving initial presentations of 20-25 minutes,

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A version of this paper was presented at Symposium 2005, "Impediments to Love: Clinical Approaches," in New York in February.

followed by discussion among the panelists and with the audience. The angle you take on the subject is up to you. Some clinical material should be included, and we hope that yours might deal with same-sex love. I don't know if you're familiar with the conference, but it's always well attended; and as far as the other participants go, you can be very sure you'll be in good company! I hope you'll agree to do it. Let me know if you have any questions . . . .

The e-mail closed with an offering of best wishes.

The more I thought about how to approach the theme, the more I became preoccupied with a series of questions that were set in motion by this invitation, and particularly by the phrase, "we hope that yours might deal with same-sex love." I think this phrase needs unpacking.

As I wondered about my approach to this presentation, I decided to take this invitation, this phrase, as the clinical vignette to present, the clinical moment to be analyzed. I will pursue some of the questions that are there to be unpacked, which I hope will promote some thought about the lingering effect of the creation of certain categories. I will approach the creation of these categories as a symptom, as an impediment to love. It is my hope that doing so will be useful in demonstrating how this symptom continues to affect our conception of love in the psychoanalytic situation.

The salutation has a warm, bracingly familiar tone, and this familiarity aroused me. Already, I was in a condition of openness, expectancy, eagerness. A few lines later, with the phrase, "we hope that yours might deal with same-sex love," I find that my state is mirrored by the expectant hope of those making this invitation. A moment of seduction, perhaps, of mutual hope at the very least, tells me that we are in the realm of wishes—the wishes of the person making the invitation and my own complementary wishes, for I am already caught up in this opening moment.

My being caught up, my eagerness, is a complex state. I have been invited to perform what is by now a familiar role, and it is one for which I have often volunteered. Throughout psychoanalytic training, gay candidates are presented with the choice of re-

maintaining silent and living with the feeling of bad faith when confronted with remnants of homophobic literature or attitudes, or being open about their sexual orientation, in which case they are routinely called upon to speak for gay people. Is this *ever* true of our heterosexual colleagues? Has anyone *ever* been asked to represent the experience of "opposite-sex love"? So my initial eagerness is tempered with wariness as we enter a familiar territory determined by the endlessly circulating process of repudiation and projection. I recognize that I am a transference figure, and the content, for the moment, has to do with same-sex love.

I am asked to tell what I know, and of course I want to tell, my wariness calmed by my hope that I can be genuinely useful, that our wishes might lead us toward a mutual satisfaction. "We hope that yours might deal with same-sex love," the invitation says. What is the wish, the fantasy expressed here? Tell us what you, as a gay analyst, know about same-sex love that we do not. Who is this "we"? Straight analysts, it stands to reason; who else would need to be told about same-sex love? This gesture, this "we," exerts definitive power.

In his elegant analysis of internalized homophobia in men, Moss (2002) describes the work performed by the transformation of first person singular to the first person plural as "the move from an anxiety-ridden, first person singular voice to the promised safety of a first person plural voice—that is, from the dangerous position of 'I want' to the more protected 'we hate'" (p. 21). Suspending for now the question of hate, I notice that the "we" in the invitation seems instantly to create a monolithic group of straight analysts to whom I can impart what I know. This move effectively defines both the person making the invitation and the group I am to address. Erased is the fact that there are probably gay people in this audience. Curiously, variability of any kind in the audience disappears. Because "same-sex" comes with no other qualifiers than the fact that it is addressed to a man, I seem to be called upon to address an audience made up only of straight *men*. Women seem to be eliminated from both the audience and the group to be understood, as "same-sex" comes to refer only to gay men, omitting lesbians.

The fantasy is getting more interesting and complex. There seems to be the notion that there is something about love between members of the same sex, more specifically between two men, that is distinctively different than love between members of the opposite sex, and that this difference is so pronounced that only a gay person can talk about it. Since this is a knowledge that is distinctively different from that available to straight people, it seems safe to assume that this knowledge does not concern those kinds of same-sex love that can generally be thought of as routinely occurring between members of the same sex, but is rather something that is decidedly not routine among straight people—that is, erotic love. Further, access to this knowledge marks a difference between gay people and straight people so pervasive that an analyst who is gay might work differently than his straight colleagues, and this different way of approaching work is indeed predicated on his sexual orientation.

For the moment, let us regard this as a fantasy condensed in this invitation: that a gay analyst does indeed love and work differently and that this difference is determined by his sexual orientation. This fantasy grants to a homosexual orientation a pervasively transformative quality, and the gay male analyst becomes a creature so invested with a specific kind of erotic knowledge or experience that it is worth making a specific request to learn about it.

This is a fantasy that this gay analyst is interpreting at a particular time and place, and that context is worth keeping in mind. This context rests on the problematic history of the attitudes of American psychoanalysis toward homosexuality, exhaustively detailed in Lewes's *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Male Homosexuality* (1988). Historically, prominent analysts described homosexuals in general with such contempt, such palpable hatred, that, in looking through these egregious examples of our literature now, it is hard for me to imagine that they were regarded as anything other than fantasmatic countertransference productions.

There has been immense progress in the last thirty years with regard to psychoanalytic thinking about gay men, and this ought not to be overlooked. Yet that fantasmatic history has not simply re-

solved. The male homosexual, Freud's (1905) original test case, began in relationship to psychoanalysis as a specimen, regarded respectfully by Freud, to be sure, but as a demonstration of the operations of his theory. Eventually, members of the specimen group became objects of contempt, pathologized and warded off. Now, with varying degrees of comfort on both sides, we are welcomed into the fold, but still marked as exemplary, functioning as both colleagues and as exceptions. Remnants of this history, transformed and defended against, circulate among and through us still, even in this more open-minded, inclusive time.

We enact residua of that history in this relationship inaugurated by the invitation. My initial response to the opening gesture was to comply, to see if I indeed could find a way to present the point of view of a gay analyst on same-sex love in the psychoanalytic situation. I regard this countertransference wish to comply as compounded not only of aspects of my character, but also of the mutual wish to protect ourselves from the remnants of the bad old days, to keep what must be dissociated in circulation, not analyzed. While, clearly, the invitation seeks to make sure the voice of the male homosexual is not silenced, it is still possible to regard it as the voice of a monolithic other. However loving the invitation, the status of "clinical example" lingers.

There must be a range of reasons for this lingering taint of specimen-hood. I imagine we could agree that there is a great deal that is distinctive about the experience of claiming an identity as a gay person, and there assuredly are distinctive sexual practices that some gay people engage in that straight people might be quite curious about, even might blanch at. But these distinctive affective and experiential phenomena are not coextensive with love. It seems, though, that the fantasies inspired by these particular differences inflect the fantasy about what same-sex love in the analytic situation might be like.

If we take seriously the request that I tell what only *I* can, then I must expand and refine the interpretation of this wish. There is, I think, a kind of wistful voyeurism that perfumes the wish. Tell us about same-sex love, tell us about what you, a man who loves

members of your sex, do, what it feels like to do what you do. Tell us what it would be like to love a member of the same sex. Tell us what it would be like to love you. Here, finally, is something distinctive. Tell us what it would be like if we were lovers. Could I find a way to describe how I'd want to fit my body around yours, and yours around mine? How our bodies might interpenetrate? And how I'd want to fit my thoughts around yours, and your thoughts around mine, my fantasies around yours, and your fantasies around mine? If we were lovers, how would I offer you myself to make use of, and what would it feel like were I to stake a claim to make use of you?

But, for some reason, that wish could not be uttered. It must take this other form, that I find a way to impart to the audience what is distinctive about same-sex love in the analytic situation. An important process is at work: the evacuation and sequestration of a certain kind of erotic love into someone who apparently has identified himself as amenable to containing and expressing something about this kind of love. It is completely understandable to me, and I presume that it is equally understandable to everyone present, that there are good reasons to ensure that *someone* talk about same-sex phenomena in a conference that seeks seriously to examine love. That it is necessary to make sure of this is in itself interesting, for while same-sex erotic love must be sequestered, its enduring presence must be ensured.

The invitation seems to take for granted that explorations of opposite-sex love would be well represented by any of the panelists invited to participate unless a specific suggestion were made. And so, while it may be apparent by this gesture that the presumed sexual orientation of the analyst determines the object of her love, it may not determine the content of her presentation. So, this logic suggests, we would need to invite an openly gay analyst to tell us about same-sex love, but we would have to explicitly indicate that part of the reason a gay analyst is invited to participate is for this very purpose.

Now, of course, it would be outrageous to invite a straight person explicitly to talk about same-sex love. You'd never hear the end

of it from irate gay analysts. But why should this so persistently be so? What would it be like to make an explicit request that a straight analyst discuss same-sex love? Would such a request, and such a discussion, be framed in terms of homosexual countertransference, or can we imagine hearing about love between a male analyst and a male patient without using some method of emotional distancing? Conversely, would a vignette from my work with a female patient be framed in terms of heterosexual countertransference?

It seems that having to make the request explicit expresses some anxiety that the openly gay analyst may not fully understand his function and unwittingly present the story of his love for a woman whom he is treating, thus leaving out the nominally distinctively different category of same-sex love. Apparently, a gay analyst might cross this specious border, while a straight analyst probably would not. Is this an example of greater freedom, and so a source of excitement and wonder, or the lingering conviction that to be gay is a shameful condition?

Why, we must ask ourselves, does this anxiety linger, to be passed back and forth among psychoanalytic colleagues? After Rado (1940) and his circle at Columbia University changed their minds about our constitutional bisexual potential, perhaps this is no longer to be taken for granted as a psychoanalytic insight. Or, if we *can* count on this as something analysts agree on, do we recognize this as another source of anxiety? It has been noted that there is a paucity of clinical reports of countertransference love of a male analyst for a male patient (Kwaver 1980). Whether this is an artifact of the selection of cases for publication and the choices made in their narration, or whether this is an indication that homosexual erotic feelings are really so rare among heterosexual male analysts, is an important question that remains to be explored.

If the invitation really did preserve the possibility that a gay analyst might discuss erotic love for a patient regardless of the patient's sex, the specific request that I talk about same-sex love assumes that I am quite versatile. And surely this versatility is a quality we value in analysts. One of the most memorable remarks my analyst made to me occurred when I was complaining that, because



she was a woman, I would miss out on the chance to develop an intense, hotly erotic transference. She replied, simply, "As if I couldn't be a man." This was a really effective interpretive remark, made by a very confident analyst, and, clearly, it had a lasting impact. She reserved our potential to engage in relationships with homosexual as well as heterosexual configurations, charged with Eros, love, and hate. The effectiveness of her interpretive remark resides in the way she pointed out to me that I was claiming that, somehow, the designations *heterosexual* and *homosexual* implied something *real* about how I could relate to her and how I could make use of her. That claim was, of course, a symptom that we analyzed. It is a symptom that circulates more generally among us still.

Ironically, if there is something distinctive and generalized to know about same-sex love, it is power, the power to designate and condemn. The type of knowledge that we can most confidently claim is shared by gay people is not about love, but about the experience of being the object of contempt, of being hated. Or perhaps, sometimes, it is that they are hated *because* of being desired, for the potential for being loved that is kindled by their very presence. So, reading my invitation as it was written, we must acknowledge that it is my designated role to *be* the person representative of the group held in contempt.

Thus, the gesture of love in this invitation also marks the boundary of hate. We all understand that the invitation was tendered in the context of a particular and well-known history. But we cannot help noticing that the invitation emphasizes the very condition it seeks to redress. What gay people understand and share is knowledge about the invisible, fictitious, but definitely real and lethal operation of that power, which is exercised in a small but telling way in this invitation. Others who are marked as "other" in some way understand the way this power operates quite well. But understanding is difficult for those who have no reason to feel marked, and whose interests are in fact better served by keeping that process invisible—and for them, some work must be performed to notice this process. The fish doesn't have a reason to notice the water it is swimming in unless it is polluted.

It is odd and disappointing to notice this process at work in a psychoanalytic context, because analysts generally are people who conceive of themselves as outsiders, I think. But as Foucault (1980) argued so convincingly, the construction of any identity or institutional presence involves just this kind of power dynamic. The claim of empirical knowledge is an exercise of power in that it locates an object of study and renders it a specimen. Its subjectivity elided, it is isolated in the gaze of the expert. The function of the analyst rests on the power that we use to assume the role of analyst, to direct our gaze toward another; it is what gives transference therapeutic leverage. Power is used even to create the category of *outsider* for ourselves, in which we may feel most comfortable. But even that category has boundaries, however shifting and contingent they may be.

To participate in the power dynamic of psychoanalytic institutions, the gay analyst, in the short history in which the term “gay analyst” has been possible at all, has had two choices: to claim his own voice and swim against the tide, or to comply, which has often amounted to agreeing to be both the specimen and the expert, simultaneously.

As the representative of this group, I could detail exactly how it is not the way we love that imparts a distinctively different knowledge to gay people, but the variety of methods we learn and devise to respond to a threatening environment, but I suspect that you have all heard some version of this story before. Another retelling of this story remains deeply unsatisfying because it does nothing to help you notice the water we are swimming in. It maintains the split that motivated the wish contained in the invitation, the sequestration that made the invitation necessary. While we might think of the problem in terms of challenges to the empathic capacities of the straight analyst, this, too, leaves the symptom intact.

It is not by studying a specimen or hearing from an expert that something interesting can be learned about same-sex love, because there is no such thing as same-sex love. There are people who love each other. Sometimes, these people have been sorted into groups according to a complex process whereby a configuration of behav-

iors or features becomes definitive. The countless case reports that have detailed the titillating and outré sexual practices of some gay people do not, finally, tell us anything about love, or even anything that is distinctive about a particular group called *gay people*. One function these case reports perform is to maintain the split, to permit us not to notice the water we are swimming in.

Because I want to be a loving, useful participant in these proceedings, to respond to the expression of interest, desire, and love that I received, I do want to find a way to tell you something that is interesting. I think the best way I can do this is to paraphrase a remark attributed to James Baldwin,<sup>1</sup> and say to you that I am gay precisely to the extent to which you think you are straight. And I am certain that the converse is also true: you are straight precisely to the extent to which I think I am gay. My thought, that I am gay and that many of you are straight, may describe certain facts about the ways we identify ourselves to ourselves and others, but to regard this distinction as telling me anything deeply meaningful about any of you is a symptom. And the thought that my being identified as gay tells you anything at all about me is equally a symptom.

If there is any hope of resolving this symptom in a more satisfactory way than designating gay people as experts to tell straight people about something called same-sex love, we must start with acknowledging the problem. We must find a way of identifying and taking back the projected psychic contents that keep these categories' specious effects alive. Then, perhaps it will be possible to talk about how *individuals* love, rather than anxiously attempting not to exclude groups of people whom we imagine must love in some different way. This will require constant vigilance to the ways that psychoanalysis as an institution participates in the creation and persistence of idealized, stereotyped identities.

Psychoanalysis's strongest bid for legitimacy is in its focus on and alignment with the individual. Any time we notice a reliance on terms that seem effortlessly to designate a group of more than one

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<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Donald Moss, M.D., and Alan Bass, Ph.D., for directing my attention to this remark.

person is, I think, a signal for renewed attention. The luxurious power to name (Dimen 2001) invisibly exerts itself, and rarely is it truly helpful—and, assuredly, it is an impediment to love.

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## WE ARE DRIVEN

BY CORDELIA SCHMIDT-HELLERAU, PH.D.

*Is metapsychology out—or in again? Is it a millstone tied around our necks—or is it an intriguing Freudian witch whom we can even dance with? Is the concept of drives an outmoded oddity—or an indispensable companion, inspiring our understanding of the patient's material and even opening new windows for further development? Can we proceed with the concept of structures and object relationships alone—or do we need the concept of drives in order to understand what these object relationships are all about?*

*The author clearly opts for the second option in each of these pairs of alternatives. Musing on the sophisticated metapsychology debate that unsettled psychoanalysis in the United States for many years, she reviews some of the most frequently quoted objections to the concept of drives. Further, she offers an introduction to modern drive theory with the new duality of sexual and preservative drives, as well as a different concept of aggression, and explains how drives relate to structures—specifically, to the representations of self and object.*

Bill sits in the library and works on his paper. He is staring into the open air, trying to formulate his argument, when suddenly another student walks by. He had briefly noticed her in the previous class, before a huge guy had placed himself in between them and

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barred his view. Now he can see that she wears one of those short, tight T-shirts that leave room to air the belly button—she has a cute little diamond sitting on top of hers. She looks smashing. Bill follows her with his eyes as she goes to the back of the room and sits down. This is his dream girl! Bill starts fantasizing about going over and introducing himself. He could say: “Are you also working on . . . ?” Silly! Maybe, instead, something fancy like “Julia Roberts would fade next to you”—even more silly! Or “What about dinner at 8:00?” He wonders what she’s reading. To whom is she talking now? Is this her boyfriend? Certainly not—that nerd! She seems to be a little older than he—but so what, times have changed. He could take his father’s car and drive her to this nice little fish restaurant on the coast . . . . At this point, Bill finds himself getting up, and sort of unpurposefully strolling toward the back of the room. His heart is pounding. He has not yet made up his mind what to say; he knows that something will come to him. She looks at him just a moment before he reaches her desk. She smiles, and he smiles, too. “Hi,” he says. “I’m Bill. I saw you this morning in philosophy class, and you look—like my analyst!”

## THE DEBATE ABOUT DRIVE THEORY

What is most specific and unique in the psychoanalytic approach to mental life is our understanding that man is *unconsciously driven* to perceive, think, feel, relate, act, interact, and react to his objects and his environment in a particular—and sometimes quite unexpected—way. Interestingly enough, though, this foundation of psychoanalysis—the *driven nature in the dynamics of our unconscious mental life*—has been questioned and discredited in American psychoanalytic discourse throughout the last three to four decades. The debate was intense, with revolutionary components; the arguments put forth were smart and inspired by the exciting idea of stepping out of our nineteenth-century scientific clogs and moving on to today’s twenty-first-century thinking and relating.

As sophisticated as the level of dispute was, however, only a few of us may remember in detail how arguments raised for and against

our most basic psychoanalytic concepts have been convincing us during those years. Instead, what we seem to have been left with in the aftermath of this battle are sloganlike headlines of some of the most prominent articles published in this debate, evidenced by the following examples. Question: "Two theories or one?" (George Klein 1973). Answer: "Metapsychology is not psychology" (Gill 1976); therefore, one theory—clinical theory—is enough (Gill 1977, p. 582). Question: "Drive or wish?" (Holt 1976), and the answer, given in the same source, is: "Drive is dead, long live wish!" (p. 194). Question: "Metapsychology—who needs it?" (Meissner 1981), posed with the rhetorical impact that seeks the answer: "Nobody!" And finally: "Does metapsychology still exist?" (Modell 1981), to which the implied answer seems to be "No!"

It is striking to note the discrepancy between the scientific level of these articles and the simple, campaignlike quality of their principal statements, which were capable of bringing about a mass movement that resulted in a widespread belief in "the actual death of metapsychology" (Holt 1985, p. 289). Regardless of how subtle and differentiated the scientific examinations of metapsychological concepts were, the resulting proclamations were rather blunt, e.g., that metapsychology, and drive theory in particular, are "worthless" (p. 292), "untenably mechanistic" (Holt 1976, p. 163), "indefensible: philosophically shaky, factually mistaken . . . often clinically misleading," and that we "must give it up" (p. 179). In reviewing the literature, Modell (1990) comes to the conclusion that "the term instinct or drive no longer exists" (p. 184).

Had Freud heard of Bill's adventure in the library, described above, he most likely would have thought that Bill was *driven by infantile sexual urges* as they had more recently resurfaced in Bill's analysis within a classical oedipal context. Of course, Bill's experiences and associations are not always that manifestly sexual and oedipal. He talks about a million things in his analytic sessions, winding his way through this and that, telling his analyst that he plans *x* and *y*, that he competes with the one and is smitten with the other, and broods over why he cannot do anything and always fails with his projects, and so on. In his analysis, he has opened the pic-

ture book of his early sexual fantasies, and now he is elaborating them with the help of whatever is available in the moment: contemporary science, politics, and literature, the events of his daily life, and in particular with his observations regarding his analyst. In many different ways, he talks about how he thinks he eventually *can* win over the love of his life, and how he defends himself against the scary aspects of such a victory.

Thus, if we consider the trajectory of Bill's associations in a single session and over the weeks, we might discover that, currently, his thoughts are *driven by unconscious sexual strivings toward his dream girl, his analyst, his mother*—and the struggles to resolve the conflicts he has about them. So we might then wonder: Has the explanatory power of Freud's drive concept really faded or been proven wrong? "Has sexuality anything to do with psychoanalysis?" (Green 1995). Has man's unconscious (as distinct from our thinking about it) become more sophisticated since the early days when Freud (1908) captured infantile sexual theories and their ongoing impact on mental life? In short, do people still experience this "old-fashioned" oedipal conflict, after all we have learned about it, leading to its status as part of our Western popular culture? What *else* is new?

It is true that Freud's metapsychological papers lead us in innumerable ways into a jungle of concepts that he developed, questioned, and recast many times throughout his life. No wonder we trip over logical breaks, puzzling contradictions, and serious inconsistencies within his model of the mind. How to deal with the situation? Certainly, we can trace the mistaken arguments, point out where he was wrong, and cut out these elements. However, we can also "make Freud work" (as French psychoanalysts might say): we can take contradictions, logical gaps, inconsistencies, and so on as a stimulus and challenge to our reflections, and try to further develop these concepts under scrutiny, thus improving the model as a whole. I have found doing this to be an exciting metapsychological journey (Schmidt-Hellerau 1997, 2001), one that I cannot summarize here. However, I want to offer a fresh look at the theoretical and clinical value and necessity of Freud's concept



of *drive*, and to show how we can relate it to psychic structure in general, and to the structures of *self* and *object* in particular.

I do not mean to say that Freud is all we need. So many important contributions have been made in the past hundred years that we cannot even think of psychoanalysis in a “purely” Freudian way any more—nor do we want to. Nevertheless, reassessing the creative potential of his basic concepts and transferring them into modern drive theory will enable us to integrate essential parts of our contemporary psychoanalytic knowledge in a comprehensive way, and, from there, to explore new areas of the mind—thus invigorating our cause quite a bit. It is my experience that many colleagues find it hard to engage in and relate to theoretical papers on an abstract metapsychological level; and that is why I will here muse on this seemingly outmoded concept—*drive*—in order to show why I think we have an absolute need for it in our clinical and theoretical thinking.

## CONFUSING DRIVE AND STRUCTURE

English-speaking psychoanalysis has been largely shaped by Strachey’s translation of Freud’s term *Trieb* as *instinct*. However, Freud distinguished precisely between *drive* (*Trieb*) and instinct (*Instinkt*), and used the latter term only six times in all of his works. *Instinct* for him meant an “inherited mental formation” (Freud 1915a, p. 195), and such a formation, whether completely inherited (e.g., the famous egg-rolling movement of the greylag goose [Lorenz 1981]) or partly inherited and partly acquired, is a complex structural unit, a *fixed action pattern* (Tinbergen 1951). The psychoanalytic notion of *Trieb* or *drive*, in contrast, designates merely “a pressure that is relatively *indeterminate* both as regards the behavior it induces and as regards the satisfying object” (Laplanche and Pontalis 1967, p. 214, italics added). According to Freud’s (1915b) conception, the drive originates in a bodily need and aims toward an object “through which the drive is able to achieve its aim” (p. 122), namely, satisfaction. Satisfaction can be achieved with many different actions and diverse objects; satisfaction is not built in, but is

learned and created via interaction with meaningful objects. Thus, the drive is defined simply as a *directed movement*: from the subject (its somatopsychic needs and wishes) to the object (which provides satisfaction).

Considering this definition, the use of the term *instinct* instead of *drive* in Strachey's translation was confusing.<sup>1</sup> It seems to have contributed to the fallacy that the terms *drive* and *motivation* are equivalent (Strachey occasionally translated *Triebkraft* as *motive force*, for example). George Klein (1967) explicitly urged that we "speak about motivation in terms of properties of a *behavioral unit of ideation, affect, and action*, and not about 'drive'" (p. 84). Thus, even though the notion of *motivation* is not a fixed action pattern, it is clearly a *specific* pattern, a *structure* containing *ideation, affect, and action*—it is not simply a push toward something. (See also Kernberg 1980.) The same principle applies for Holt's claim that *drive* can be replaced by *wish* because every wish is structured by the configuration "S wants O," which is a specific configuration of a Self (representation), an Object (representation), and an affect/action (representation).

Hence, all three notions—*instinct*, *motivation*, and *wish*—designate quite complex structure formations, while the notion of *drive* merely stands for the directed movement that will energize these structures (wishes).<sup>2</sup> This distinction must be appreciated, first of

<sup>1</sup> The gravity of this difference is acknowledged in plans to revise the *Standard Edition* under the leadership of Mark Solms; in this new edition, *instinct* will be replaced by *drive* (Solms 2005). In the remainder of this paper, I will consistently use the notion of *drive* instead of *instinct*.

<sup>2</sup> The same applies to Brenner's (1982) distinction between *drive*, an "impersonal and general" concept, and *drive derivative*, a synonym of drive representation or drive representative. The latter is for him a personal and specific (clinical) concept: "A *drive derivative* is a *wish* for gratification . . . . A drive derivative is unique, individual, and specific. The concept of drive, on the contrary, is a generalization about drive derivatives, based on many individual observations and inferences" (p. 26, italics added). In my view, Brenner's drive derivative—a wish—is a structure, and here I agree. However, the term *drive derivative* seems to make the wish a part of the drive, which might also end up mingling *drive* with *structure*. It is interesting that Freud used the term *derivative* with regard to the unconscious (Laplanche and Pontalis 1967, p. 116)—in speaking of the *derivates of the repressed*, which again are *unconscious wishes*, hence structures cathected by drives.

all. One can certainly understand that psychoanalysts wanted to get rid of the ethological term *instinct*, which must have felt at odds with human psychic life; however, the suggested replacements do not capture what Freud conceptualized by the notion of *drive*. Instead, these replacements went on *mingling drive with structure*, which eventually created a serious problem for psychoanalytic thinking and development.

This is why I wish to propose two short definitions of *drive* and *structure* at the beginning of this discussion: they make clear how I will use them here and how they can advantageously be used in general. First, the term *drive* designates a one-directional movement of psychic energy, a force that has its starting point in a bodily need (and how it becomes represented) and “drives” (virtually endlessly) in one direction until it finally reaches the required object of satisfaction or its mental representation. Its conception can be best pictured as an *arrow*.

*Structure* is used here in its most common meaning as any unit within which the parts or elements are organized, arranged, or interrelated in a specific way. Its conception can be nicely pictured as a *snowflake*. We conceptualize the mind as a functional organization of structures on different levels of complexity: thus, a *wish* as described above is a relatively small and clearly circumscribed (micro-)structure; while the *superego*, on the other hand, is a big and very complex (macro-)structure. The *representations of self and object* that I will focus on in particular are two rather complex structures of the mind, harboring and elaborating to varying degrees the wishes, as well as interacting with and being part of the superego.

Given these two definitions, I conceptualize the interaction between drive and structure as follows: whatever we experience, store, and create in our minds is represented as a structure, and what activates or energizes these structures are the drives. Without the drives’ energy, these structures exist but are *inactive*. It is only their cathexis from the drives that makes these structures effective.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> We are used to conceptualizing these cathexes as a mixture of both the primal drives’ energies, but for clarity, we might here think of one or the other drive as taking the leading role.

Thus, the structure has been compared to a light bulb that requires the switching on of electrical energy in order to light up, an analogy I find appropriate.

I am not concerned with the question of whether these definitions match exactly what Freud once said, wrote, or meant to state; this would be of historical or biographical interest, but is not my point here. Instead, I want to assert that distinguishing between the notions of drive and structure in this clearly defined way is in accordance with Freud's thinking in general, and helps us reassess the function of modern drive theory in our understanding of how the mind works.

The whole metapsychological model of the mind is based upon these two concepts, *drive* and *structure*—it is a “drive/structure model” (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983); the drives provide the model's dynamics, and the structure provides its stability. Of course, drive and structure are not real things; they are comprehensive constructs that we have invented in order to build a theory—and theories, too, are inventions, created to fill the gap between what we know as a fact and what we do not know but want to know. For example, as long as man did not understand how a thunderstorm came about, he made up theories about it (gods banging clouds together, etc.). Since we now know how thunderstorms come about, we no longer have a theory about them, but simply the description of the processes resulting in a thunderstorm. That is to say, theories create hypotheses about what we do not know—e.g., how the mind works. Consequently, they are always speculative, even though they usually convey a consistent set of those hypotheses thought to be the most plausible at a specific time, considering all the facts that we *do* know. That is why a theoretical creation is not wild or totally free. However, it could still be called a fiction because it extends beyond knowable facts, and it is particularly this extension, these *ideas beyond the knowable* that push and guide our inquiry and research. It follows that theories cannot be “true”; they can only be more or less, or not at all, heuristically fruitful.

Considering this, metapsychology can be viewed as an indispensable *theoretical model* about *how the mind works in general*. It

is not about the *specifics* of how a person experiences his/her individual life. Even though these are two different ways of looking at psychic processes, they relate to each other in a dialectical movement that we have to grapple with (Smith 2003a). Rising to this very challenge to our thinking is what makes psychoanalysis a profession—that is, in comparison to the helpful support and suggestions that a patient might receive from family or friends (Busch and Schmidt-Hellerau 2004). I believe that, in order to optimally treat a patient, we need to think about both: the patient's individual history and the specifics of his/her personal experience, on the one side, and the general principles of mental functioning that come into play while processing and creating this kind of experience, on the other side.

## DRIVE: A BORDER CONCEPT

There are two reasons to focus on drive theory: first, because it is a central concept, at the heart of metapsychology—the basis of what we understand by the dynamic moment of psychic processes; and, second, because it has been much more discredited than the notion of structure—thus, “the debate about metapsychology can be reduced to debate over drive theory” (Opatow 1989, p. 647). Holt (1976), one of drive theory's sharpest critics, has actually felt quite torn about it:

What is loosely known as the theory of instincts includes both a number of *Freud's most important and lasting insights* and some of *his most regrettable theoretical failings*. It badly needs fundamental revision; but the process must be both *radical* and *conservative*—what is *not good* must be *extirpated at the root*, but what is *good* must be *retained*. [p. 158, italics added]

Holt wishes to preserve the insights of psychoanalytic drive theory, but he ends up claiming that “nothing less than discarding the concept of drive or instinct will do” (p. 159). Here we might wonder: How can we preserve the “most important insights” if we ex-

tirpate at the root the very concept they are based upon? And: What else could replace the notion of *drive* once it is given up? George Klein's (1967) suggestion to instead use the term *peremptory ideation* has not generally felt practical or appealing to most of our colleagues; our discussions show that this term has not become part of our psychoanalytic vocabulary. A convincing replacement for this important concept has not come up. Twenty-three years after Klein proposed this term, and in the wake of further developments in this long-lingering dispute on metapsychology, Modell (1990) still emphasizes the "need to find a viable substitute for instinct theory" (p. 195).

Basically, we are free to name a theoretical concept whatever we might choose—yet there seem to be some requirements to do so successfully. There is something about the *parsimony* and *simplicity* of theory in general, and its notions in particular, that seems to determine whether a theory works or not. The term *drive* has this comprehensive simplicity: It captures the essentials that we want to address with it, and it is placed at the border between (abstract) theory and (concrete) experience. We can define the notion of *drive* as a metapsychological concept concerning the direction of the dynamic movement of psychic processes, *and* we can experience ourselves as *being driven* to do something. I think we are actually quite lucky to have this notion of drive at our disposal because it plays on both levels, the level of our theoretical thinking and the level of our (the patient's) personal experience. Critics certainly do not deny the existence of that feeling—man's being driven to a specific goal; they have objected only to the theoretical side of this notion. So let us have a closer look at the latter.

It is my sense that Freud was fully aware of and appreciated the fact that the notion of drive allows for this double use, in the sense of an abstract concept and of an experience-near quality or psychic phenomenon. Yet in his famous, often quoted definition of drive, Freud (1915b) points to still another link that is made possible with this notion, the link between the physiological and the psychological.

If we now apply ourselves to considering mental life from a *biological*<sup>4</sup> point of view, a “drive” appears to us as a concept on the border<sup>5</sup> between the mental and the somatic, as the psychical representative of the stimuli originating from within the organism and reaching the mind, as a measure of the demand made upon the mind for work in consequence of its connection with the body. [p. 121]

This and similar statements led to an extensive debate about whether the notion of drive is actually a rather biological or a purely psychological concept. In order to understand this idea of a “concept on the border” or *border concept* (*Grenzbegriff*), let us think of the border between the United States and Canada. Is this border American or is it Canadian? The answer is: It is neither American nor Canadian. It is an international agreement about the size or endings of each one’s territory. Best to explain that it is a thin line on a map, dependent on two signatures on a contract—which can be changed. In most areas, you cannot even see it, and in that respect, it is also virtual. Now the same applies for the *drive as a border concept between the psychic and the somatic*: It is neither psychological nor biological. It is an intellectual agreement, a theoretical construct, something that does not exist in reality in a material sense, but is a notion we find helpful in *thinking* about psychic phenomena as different from *and* connected with somatic phenomena.

Thus, the metapsychological concept of drive—and, I suggest, all metapsychology—is an abstract mental construct, a concept (and a model) at the border between biology and psychology, dividing and linking both. That is why a question like “Is there such a thing as a *death drive*?” (which is usually answered with “no”) represents a failure in thinking; the questions can only be “Are there phenomena that we can unite by a notion to be defined and called

<sup>4</sup> Strachey added emphasis to the word *biological* here, but it was not emphasized in Freud’s original German text, and I do not believe that such an emphasis was intended by Freud.

<sup>5</sup> Strachey translated *Grenze* as *frontier*—however, I would replace it here with the more usual term *border*.

the *death drive*?" and "Does it make sense, or is it heuristically fruitful, to make use of such a concept?"

An intriguing question, then, is how this border concept of drive divides and links biology and psychology. Freud (1910), informed by Darwin, started out with two categories of basic or primal drives:

[There are] . . . *drives which subserve sexuality*, the attainment of sexual pleasure, *and those other drives, which have as their aim the self-preservation of the individual*—the ego-drives. As the poet has said, all the organic drives that operate in our mind may be classified as "*hunger*" or "*love*."  
[p. 213, italics added]

In fact, we cannot ignore the demands of the body for food and sex; they powerfully affect and besiege our minds with images, thoughts, impulses, and feelings—in particular, when something interferes with their satisfaction—and we would be lying if we did not admit that we have all at times felt strongly *driven* to promptly go for the one or the other. Thus, Freud's first drive theory made much sense; it implicitly divided all mental activity according to one of the two somatopsychic functions, self-preservation and sexuality (both applied in the broadest sense of these terms).

Given the important position of these two primal drives, reemphasized by Freud throughout the first twenty years of his writings, I am intrigued by the fact that he elaborated on only one of them, the sexual drive. The self-perservative or ego drive (as he occasionally called it after 1910) merely followed along in the shadow of sexuality. In 1920, when Freud started to revise his metapsychology, he unfortunately merged sexuality *and* self-preservation into his new *life drive*, and declared a *death or aggressive drive* to be its antagonist. Since then, with Freud, we have all—even those who have turned away from drive theory altogether—considered sexuality and aggression as *the two basic primal drives* or motivating factors in mental life. As a consequence of this shift, self-preservation—or the *preservative drive*, as I have suggested (Schmidt-Hellerau 2005a)—became a blind spot in our psychoanalytic perception. It



is not that we did not notice, for example, the attachment and separation issues of a clinging patient who does not feel safe without his analyst, or the anxieties of the hypochondriacal patient who is convinced she will shortly die, or the worries of the obsessional-compulsive patient who needs to constantly clean everything, including himself, in order to rid himself of dangerous germs. It is only that we were used to understanding these problems as conflicts around sexuality and aggression, and no doubt these *are* important factors in what makes our patients suffer.

However, it seems to me that, while translating such patients' pain into sexual and aggressive issues, we may have failed to appreciate how much these patients are unconsciously *scared to death*, how much they *struggle to survive*, how much they are basically *driven* to do all they feel is necessary *to preserve themselves* and/or their objects. The three examples of patients above are amongst the louder ones—yet I also wonder: Do we notice the softer voices that speak of these needs or the neglects of self- and object preservation in our day-to-day clinical work? If we included in our thinking and listening the concept of a preservative drive as a basic and primal force of the mind, wouldn't this open our ears to the more subtle associations that communicate the patient's self- and object-preservative concerns—which are sometimes the major cause of the patient's inhibitions and depressions, and can even constitute the main trajectory of all his/her neurotic derailments?

I agree with Smith (2005a) about the need to differentiate between the uses of *drive* in metapsychology and in clinical work. He draws a distinction between drives and drive derivatives or wishes as being on different levels of abstraction, and questions whether it is possible for “the material that the analyst observes in the hour [to be] a kind of window through which the drives can be seen quite directly” (p. 344). I think the distinctions between levels of abstractions (see Schmidt-Hellerau 2001, pp. 10-17) relate mainly to the purpose of our psychoanalytic discourse—whether we talk about drives within a metapsychological framework (their definition, their function, contribution to structure building, and so on), or whether we talk about the concrete clinical phenomena that we

have captured and conceptualized (on a metapsychological level) as drives (e.g., the patient's unconscious and conscious *urges*). Keeping this in mind, I would feel comfortable in saying that we can observe the workings of the drives, drive activity, the ideational expression of the drives, or drive derivatives in the analytic hour; to state this differently, if we had not developed the *concept* of drives, we would not be able to observe drive *derivatives* either.

To hold on to and to reorganize drive theory—to decide which drives we postulate as primary—is not just a matter of theory; it is a matter of practical work. I will not discuss Freud's 1920 theory of life drive and death drive here<sup>6</sup>; I want to highlight the sexual and preservative drives as primal, and also to explain my conceptualization of aggression, these three influences being the most relevant for our daily clinical work. Recently, I have elaborated on some ideational and affective expressions of self- and object-preservative strivings (Schmidt-Hellerau 2005a), and I would like now to focus on the preservative drive (or what we could call a *partial drive*, hunger), in order to demonstrate the important role of our concept of drive in psychic processes occurring at the border between soma and psyche.

## HUNGER: PART OF THE PRESERVATIVE DRIVE

Hunger occurs as a *feeling* when an indefinite number of somatic incidents come together—for instance, the blood sugar level and/or the body temperature decreases, receptors in the stomach signal empty contractions, and so on. The whole ensemble of known (and still unknown) somatic processes that stir up our feeling of hunger can be bundled and conceptualized, according to a metapsychological scheme, as a partial drive for self-preservation. What makes hunger *psychoanalytically* interesting is the fact that it drives us to a potentially endless number of fantasies, thoughts, feelings, and

<sup>6</sup> For a more detailed discussion of Freud's second drive theory, see Schmidt-Hellerau 1997, 2001, 2005b, in press.

behaviors that actually fill a substantial part of our daily mental life. In the simplest example, when we are hungry, something like a sandwich pops up on our mental screen, we go and get it, eat it, and that's it. But the process becomes more complicated if we want a specific food and have to find out where and how to get it; this already affords a lot more mental activity. Or, think of a situation in which we are prevented from getting something to eat, perhaps because we are sitting in the middle of a two-hour conference; then—sometimes even without realizing that we are getting hungry—we might find ourselves distracted: all of a sudden we feel annoyed to see our neighbor slowly chewing something, or we might lose ourselves in musing about whom we want to invite for the next Thanksgiving party, even though it is only April. These are a few examples of how a conscious or preconscious sense of hunger *drives* us to all sorts of ideas and activities that we would not have had if we had not been hungry. There is nothing neurotic about this, but much psychic activity is involved.

The most obvious examples of the *psychopathological sides of hunger* are, certainly, eating disorders, hypochondria, or psychosomatic disorders centering around the stomach. Patients with these problems are unremittingly, and at times completely, preoccupied with obsessing and puzzling about their food intake and digestion; they have lots of strong feelings around these concerns and need to do something about them. They are literally *driven* to rally all their psychic activities around these issues because, in the end, such issues are all about dealing on a more or less unconscious level with self-preservation and the warding off of an imagined fear of threatening death.

Certainly, much more often, we have a neurotic patient on the couch who is freely associating. For instance, a patient named Amy tells me about this wonderful little Italian delicacy store that she discovered yesterday after our session. Even though she had planned to go directly to the library, she eventually found herself in the middle of a discussion with the shopkeeper about a specific combination of vegetables. Of course, once again, she bought much too much; she is always so uncertain about whether she'll

have enough or not . . . Then she indulges in telling me how she was later preparing these vegetables with a rack of lamb, and all the herbs she used according to a new recipe from the *New York Times Magazine*; more details follow. Amy pauses, and then tells me how afraid she was of ruining the dinner, of the risk entailed in preparing it in a totally new way. She so wanted to surprise and please her husband. Everything actually turned out quite well: the meat had this spicy crust on the outside and was as pink inside as it should be, the vegetables matched amazingly well (she had not been sure about that), and they had a French baguette with it and some chianti . . . I sit and listen to her somewhat anxious and defensive voice, and I wonder: Why is she telling me this, why does *this* come up, and why does she sound so worried about it?

Here an analyst might have all sorts of ideas, depending on where the psychoanalytic process is at this point, where the previous session stopped, and where his/her countertransference feelings go. Maybe the patient wants to tell her analyst that she can make use of something new she has learned in the analysis, “a new recipe,” and with this, she tells her analyst that “your food was good, I liked it, I could digest it and make use of it.” Or, on the contrary, she might be saying that she has no need of food from the analyst (interpretations), but can prepare much better food on her own by using a magazine. Or, on a competitive road, she might want to emphasize that her food is certainly better than anything the analyst might ever cook. Or, the patient might aim to project her deprived feeling of not getting what she assumes her analyst gives to someone else by trying to make her analyst envious that it is her husband who got to eat this perfect meal, not the analyst herself. And so on.

In this specific case of my session with Amy, I felt admiration for the perfect meal. She displayed it to me as it might have existed in a cookbook—no criticism was possible. However, considering her anxious and defensive voice, my sense was that, while wanting to be the perfect cook (competing with me, as well as seeking my admiration for how well she had done), Amy was also afraid of some criticism coming from me—e.g., that her meal might not

have been so perfect, or that she should have instead gone to the library and worked. What she had accomplished felt to her to be on shaky ground, for reasons that we would need to learn more about. Then my thoughts went to her worries of never having enough—to survive? Something essential was missing—something that made her afraid of the insatiable other, whose hunger threatened to engulf her. She needed to have and to give me a lot, yet she was not sure whether it would ever be good enough, whether I would ever be satisfied.

Without elaborating further here on what emerged in this hour, let me clarify that my point is that Amy's food talk is associative material; it fills out her analytic hour, it is psychologically complex and meaningful, and it is designed to tell me something important. So the question with her—as with all analysts' associations—is always: What *drives the patient to have these food associations* and not others?

Before we explore this question further, another objection related to the concept of drive must be addressed.

## REDUCTIONISM

The standard argument that follows here is one of the strongest-felt objections and one of the most often heard: Psychoanalytic drive theory is reductionistic. It reduces the whole variety and diversity of individual thoughts to just two basic drives—and this is impossible. Holt, correctly pointing out that Freud “made it explicit in several contexts (1905, 1911) that all motivation originated in bodily stimuli” (Holt 1976, p. 165), strongly objects to this point of view: “I do not hesitate to say that it is impossible to demonstrate any relevant somatic stimulation connected with the vast majority of human motives” (p. 165).

However, as the brain is part of the body and constantly provides somatic stimuli to which we react on a mental, psychological level, all human motives are connected to the somatic. Further, would Holt's (1976) assertion have been different if it had been based on the sexual and the preservative instead of an aggressive drive?

It is clinically obvious that sex and aggression in their many manifestations are overridingly important; but fear, anxiety, dependence, self-esteem, curiosity, and group belongingness (to name only an obvious handful) cannot validly be reduced to sex and aggression, and are motivational themes the therapist cannot afford to ignore. [Holt 1976, p. 169]

As Amy's session exemplifies, feelings of fear, dependence, self-esteem, curiosity, and so on do come up in the context of food concerns. So the aim is not to *reduce* all her feelings and fantasies by saying something like: Amy is just hungry—or Amy thinks her husband/analyst is hungry (which would already be an intriguing difference). Rather, we might see how many feelings—how many worries, hopes, and pleasures, how many activities, interactions, and ambitions—emerge around *her being driven* to enter this delicacy store, to prepare this dinner, and to tell me about it. Feeding themes like these might indicate a deep unconscious greed, a sense of starving—or of having previously exploited, eaten up, or taken too much from the analyst, who then needs to be re-filled. Thus, the notion of a self- and object-preservative drive does not *reduce*; rather, it *widens* our access to the clinical material, *and* it provides a comprehensive concept within which all the single events the patient relates (the many feelings, thoughts, fantasies, and actions) make *meaning* as part of the patient's *striving for a specific, still unconscious goal*.

But there is more to it than this. Obviously Amy's material presents the need or wish side of hunger in a rather concrete, literal sense. However, a patient does not need to talk about *food* to communicate a deep, threatening, and insatiable hunger. Instead, she might talk about many other things: swallowing up books, not being able to stop watching TV, wanting more and more interpretations from her analyst, endlessly increasing the preliminary research data for a paper she plans to write, or in many other ways. All these greed themes might be stimulated by self-preservative needs, indicating the patient's need to engulf everything as if it were food and would ensure her survival. The case of the student workaholic who displays some sort of "intellectual obesity" is

clearly different from that of another student with a mature, creative, and productive way of studying. However, the same issues (piling up books, amassing data and knowledge by reading and researching, a yearning for interpretations, and so forth) might have a more phallic (“showing off”) or erotically exciting (“being stimulated by and excited about it”) unconscious meaning for a third student.

Here it is important to realize that *it makes a difference* whether a striving for some sort of incorporation is primarily *self-preservative* or *sexual*. The mere object (e.g., books), and the (inter-)action with it (e.g., accumulating them), does not tell us what function they serve for the patient. What drive theory helps us to capture is the general trajectory of the patient’s strivings that provide an understanding of *the unconscious meaning* of the issues at stake, of *what moves the patient in doing these things, what drives her to bring them up*—how does she use or abuse them, what is she struggling with, and what does this behavior aim for in a particular moment of a cure? And, last but not least: Is all that occurs in a particular moment *pressing* for satisfaction, or *repressing* satisfaction?

Holt (1976) elaborates on his interpretation of Freud’s views in furthering the reductionism argument:

Another curious feature of Freud’s various versions of his theory of instinctual drives is his strong preference for only two fundamental motives, to which all others could be reduced . . . . It was as if his conviction about the central importance of *conflict* forced him always to postulate an opposed duality of basic drives. [p. 169, italics in original]

Holt is right in that Freud’s conflict theory and his understanding of the dynamics between drive and repression are essentially based on the antagonism of two primal drives (Freud 1910, 1925). To me, however, this hypothesis is less “curious” than heuristically fruitful. Green (1999), who admits that there is no longer “a consensus on the hypothesis of a primal conflict setting two major groups of drives in conflict with each other” (p. 82), reminds us

that “the thesis of fundamental drive conflict corresponds in Freud to an exigency, that is to say, of explaining the fact that the conflict can be repeated, displaced, transposed and that its permanence resists all the transformations of the psychical apparatus” (p. 83). Even though we certainly can observe, describe, and analyze conflict in various ways (Smith 2003a<sup>7</sup>), I am not sure that these differences necessarily preclude or contradict its conceptualization with regard to the basic drives’ antagonism. We might look at the same issue from different perspectives, or use different languages to talk about it, or use drive conflict in a more or less restrictive way. For instance, Smith (2003b) suggests that the erotic and aggressive drives are never in conflict unless one is defending against the other. I would agree with respect to sexuality and aggression. However, our view might change if we consider preservative and sexual drives as primary. I have recently proposed (Schmidt-Hellerau 2005a) that we can think of conflict as *monolithic* or *binary*, depending on whether only one of the sexual and the preservative drives, or both, are involved, and that conflict always plays out as a struggle between the objects of these primal drives.

This latter perspective leads to some exemplary questions about the predominance of wish and defense: Is a patient who indulges in chocolate-eating orgies, or who feels sickly and in need of a doctor, expressing a *wish* to be taken care of (based on an unconscious fantasy of being endangered in her survival), and thus conveying self-preservative drive activities striving for satisfaction; or is that same patient expressing a (regressive) *defense* against the arousal of sexual wishes toward her analyst? Further, does a patient *defend* against self-preservative wishes to be taken care of by her analyst by engaging in promiscuous sexual adventures, or are these enactments to be understood as an untamed expression of her sexual drives—i.e., a provocative revenge for not being accepted as her analyst’s love object?

<sup>7</sup> This might also apply to those who do *not* consider conflict theory as central to psychoanalysis any longer. Smith (2003b) suggests that “many theorists who would emphasize alternatives to conflict theory may be speaking of aspects of experience that are not mutually exclusive from, but may quite compatibly exist within, a conflictual view of the mind at different levels of generalization” (p. 91).



I think that relating conflict to the two primal drives is tremendously stimulating in terms of our clinical reflections on the patient's material. So we might consider: Isn't it interesting, doesn't it make a difference, and what does it mean that Amy chooses *food* and not some sort of *erotic* item to reach out for, appeal to, compete with, or please her husband (and me in the transference)? Does Amy prefer to step into her kitchen, rather than exploring new and exciting sources (research materials) in the library, because she has a conflict about her progress in analysis, based on an unconscious or conscious idea/sense that her mother-analyst needs to be relentlessly object-preservative, needs to be constantly required as the helpful (overprotective) caretaker who cannot let go (Schmidt-Hellerau, in press)? Or does the patient employ thoughts and activities about food as an unconscious or preconscious defense against her sexual wishes and fantasies? Or is this choice a compromise in that, by cooking for her husband (a success story for her analyst), Amy makes up for enacting an unconscious castration fantasy that her husband will be too tired after dinner for sex (i.e., the analyst would feel disappointed that the patient has made no progress in her work)? Or—quite the opposite—does Amy use the food (talk) as some sort of seductive, erotic foreplay, as an introduction to her sexual longings?

There are many clinically relevant questions that come up if we are holding in mind, in general, the concept of two opposing primal drives, and—as always—the patient's associations, together with the analyst's countertransference understanding, will help us figure out which way to go. All of this demonstrates that drive theory is quite the opposite of reductionism. The reductionism argument actually stands the heuristics of the notion of drive on its head (in a rhetorically effective, yet misleading way), and we can easily turn it back on its feet by noting: Isn't it fascinating to observe these virtually endless ramifications (displacements, reversals, amplifications, and so forth) that emerge when a basic drive's need (which is never felt to be satisfied, nor could it be given up) is psychically activated, stimulating the patient to be creative in her thinking and communications?

One might view the patient's associations in relation to the drive as like a tree's innumerable branches, with leaves and blossoms that all spring from one basic trunk. To appreciate the beauty of the top of the tree does not mean reducing it to its trunk—just as we cannot and should not ignore the trunk out of which this individual tree's variety of branching grows, for without this trunk, there would be no branching. Let me elaborate this tree metaphor a little further: below ground, there is another "treetop," the branching of roots, which we can compare to the somatic processes that we presuppose for the border concept drive. This image conveys the whole complexity of physiological processes (integration of brain stem, midbrain, and higher cortical functions, as well as their interaction with bodily organs, and with neurophysiological, neurohormonal, and immunological processes) that come together into something like the *somatic side of hunger*—which leads to another complexity, the *psychic side of hunger*, with all its ramifications of fantasies, thoughts, feelings, and actions mentioned above.

If we always had to talk of all the details implied in a particular experience, we would never come to an end of the discussion. And this is one important function of the theoretical concept of drive: it allows us to conceive of the general trajectory. For instance, it is practical and helpful for us to conceptualize a simple notion—e.g., hunger—as part of a more general and comprehensive concept—e.g., the *preservative drive*, when we think about hunger-related issues in a psychoanalytic context.

## DRIVE ENERGY AND AGGRESSION

Many papers have been published about the concept of psychic energy (e.g., Applegarth 1971; Gill 1977; Rosenblatt and Thickstun 1970; Swanson 1977), which postulate that this concept distorts the logico-philosophical requirements of conceptualizing the mind-body relationship, is scientifically untenable, and at odds with all laws of physics and thermodynamics, as well as clinically "useless" and "irrelevant to the explanation and understanding of human

behavior" (Swanson 1977, p. 603). Therefore, we might wonder, can't we do without the concept of psychic energy?

The most important argument concerns the nature of psychic energy—what this energy *is*. Rosenblatt and Thickstun (1970) assert that the concept of psychic energy is based on a mind-body *dualism*: "Drive energies are biological in origin but are somehow translated into psychic representations, neither biological nor chemical in nature, but instead 'psychic'—and this is the 'energy' with which psychoanalysis deals" (p. 269). What is being criticized here is the implication of a mysterious jump from physiological (measurable) energy into some sort of psychic (immeasurable) energy. However, psychic energy is a metapsychological notion, and thus a *border concept*, like *drive*, *neither biological nor psychological*—it is a tool that helps us think about some of the occurrences within psychic processes.

Holt (1976) disputes this:

Psychic energy lacks any explanatory power and is merely a set of descriptive metaphors. They owe their survival not to enhancing our understanding or providing any new insights into the detailed workings of behavior, thought, and affect, but to their rich literary suggestiveness. [p. 171]

I would not discredit "literary suggestiveness"; it speaks to the fact that this concept captures *something essential*—some way of being *energized* (or not) that we all know from our own experience. Freud accounted for this specific feeling by making *energy* an important and integral part of his drive concept. The drive provides the *direction*, the *movement*, and the energy is *what* is directed, the "*something*"—a specific *quantity*—that is invested in, for example, an object (its representation), an activity, a feeling, and so forth. Of course, there is no physical measure of this quantity; however, it is pragmatically and theoretically important to think of quantitative differences of energy, because these differences correspond to our experiences of *more* or *less*—a constant concomitant of *all* our psychic activities. There is always some sort of *quantity* implied when we talk of *strong* or *weak* beliefs, when we have a *power-*

*ful* or a *subtle* feeling, are *heavily* or *only peripherally* involved, or show a *strong* or a *lack of* interest, to give a few examples. Thus, *quantities* determine our psychic presence and experience to a considerable degree, and that needs to be addressed in the corresponding theoretical construct.

Also, quantities affect our psychic equilibrium. The assumption is that all living beings, including humans, try to stay within a certain range of dynamic stability (homeostasis), physiologically as well as psychologically. If there is “too much” or “too little” on one or the other side, our system is thrown out of balance (perceived as unpleasure expressed in different degrees of anxiety). For instance, the concept of psychic trauma is based on this quantitative measure, metapsychologically spoken: a “too much” or a “too little” of an impact in relation to the structural capacity to balance it (or, experientially spoken, an over- or understimulation that is severely shocking or depriving for a person in relation to his or her need for stability). In consequence of this basic idea of homeostasis, we assume that a quantitative imbalance will set off reactions—for instance, defenses—as coping mechanisms. That is to say, not only do we have to deal with the *dynamics* of psychic conflicts, the shifts between the two antagonistic drives, but we also have to deal with *energy quantities*, that is, different degrees of *intensity*, a specific “more or less” amount of energy marshaled in order to defend one position or to strive for another. As Opatow (1989) put it: “‘Psychic energy’ would be a measure of the *intensity* of this activity” (p. 647, italics added).

### *Rethinking Aggression*

These principles allow us to rethink our conceptualization of aggression. As I have elaborated elsewhere (Schmidt-Hellerau 2002), I doubt that it is wise to think of aggression as a primal drive or as a motivating factor *in itself*. While sexuality is about having sex, and self-preservation is about preserving oneself (thus, they are primal drives, not reducible to anything else), aggression is not about aggression per se, but is always about something else—namely, about survival or sexuality, or about overcoming or defeat-

ing any interference, real or imagined, to the goals of those two primal drives. In order to succeed, we will increase our efforts as expressed by the energy quantities invested in our strivings. That is to say, what we experience as aggression is the expression of *intensified* sexual or preservative drive activity.<sup>8</sup>

The rationale for this is: A drive is defined as a movement from the (somatopsychic) source of the subject's need/desire to the object of satisfaction; if satisfaction is not achieved, then unpleasure persists; thus, the goal of getting to the required object is a decisive determinant of any drive activity. How can the mental apparatus successfully meet this requirement?

Within each object relationship, the regulation of *closeness* and *distance* is crucial. However, to be in a psychological sense *near* or *distant* is not just a matter of inches or meters. As long as a small child feels safe and secure, mother is close enough if she is somewhere in the house; if the same child is hungry or scared, mother is much too far away if she is only in the next room. In this sense, closeness and distance are drive-related categories. It is the momentary need/desire—be it stirred up from the inside or from the outside—that determines whether the distance to the object of satisfaction is *just right*, *too little*, or *too big*. Obviously, this is something very complex to measure. I believe that our minds are constantly calculating and anticipating the appropriate intensity afforded in order to *reach*, to *frighten off*, to *flee*, or to *destroy* the relevant object.

During the child's development, these complex processes of computation are learned and stored—like the child's purposeful grasping movements, which first miss the desired object, then

<sup>8</sup> How shall we consider the *intensity* of a drive's activity—since that intensity is a function of *quantity* and *speed*, the latter of these being a function of *time* and *distance*? As an illustration, we might think of a series of actions: You can touch a man, push, hit, knock him down, or kill him. The differences among these actions are determined by the energy quantities and by the *speed* with which they occur—that is, the *time* within which the hand or its projectile makes its way to the object (e.g., the bigger the rock and the higher its speed, the greater the intensity with which it hits its target), as well as the *distance* between the point at which the energy is initiated and the object.

knock it down; and only bit by bit does the child learn to evaluate how far the arm has to reach out in order to pick up the object, how quickly this has to happen in order to catch it if it is moving, and how strongly the hand has to hold it in order to keep it without either losing or squeezing it. Computations of this kind are the basis for activating the necessary energy quantities and setting the desired speed in relation to any specific action. They are learned and stored in our mental structures, and, as mature or immature as these structures may be, they are used in order to *anticipate* the appropriate intensity of any striving. Thus, if the drive object is far away, more energy is put up in order to reach it than if it is close by.

However, in states of psychopathology or neurotic conflict, these anticipatory processes fail. A regressed patient in analysis might react like a child who is afraid that the libidinal object is absent-minded or withdrawing, while she, the analyst, is actually quite with him; thus, he might angrily raise his voice in order to reach her; or he might feel threatened in thinking the analyst came too close, and he might need to preserve himself by furiously pushing her away.

What I am suggesting here is that we do not get angry or aggressive merely in order to enjoy our aggression. But we do get increasingly angry and aggressive if we are hungry and prevented from eating—or, more generally, if our self-preservation, our survival, is (or is neurotically feared to be) attacked or endangered; and we do get enraged and aggressive if our loved one is flirting with someone else. Greed/envy and jealousy are the classical motivations for murder. Or, with regard to narcissism (which may concern both our libidinal and preservative investments in ourselves), we might get angry if our cherished ideas, or we ourselves, seem to be victims of ridicule, depreciation, or questioning. Thus, what is correctly perceived as aggression is an activity of this intensity that is put up in order to defend, regulate, or overcome the distance to the object of the individual's preservative and sexual strivings. And that is why I suggest staying with the sexual and preservative drives as primal, and why I define aggression as the expression of an *intensification* of either or both of them.

It is interesting to note that Brenner's (1982) argument against Freud's conceptualization of drives as "somatopsychic or frontier phenomena in mental life" stands or falls with the conceptualization of aggression:

It is not until one turns from libido theory to the theory of aggression that the evidence against the frontier concept of drives becomes irrefutable. As long as libido was the only drive, i.e., before 1920, it could be argued that the frontier concept was tenable. [Brenner 1982, p. 15]

Of course, there were always two drives evident in Freud's thinking, even though he focused on just one of them. Nevertheless, I agree with Brenner's statement that what is "fundamental to Freud's concept of a drive is that it is something somatopsychic. . . . The source of a drive, Freud believed, is a somatic process, e.g., excitation of nerve endings in an erogenous zone, in the case of libido" (p. 16). Psychoanalysis has always struggled with the paucity of equivalent sources for aggression—and that is precisely where and why Brenner departs from the drive as a "frontier concept." However, if we conceptualize aggression as an intensified expression of the sexual and preservative drives, and postulate that the sources of the preservative drive are, as I have called them, the *biogenic zones* (that is, primarily, all the inner organs necessary for self-preservation—the stomach for hunger, the lungs for breathing, etc., and, further, the whole body with its requirements for integrity, analogous to the whole skin as an erotogenic zone for the sexual drive<sup>9</sup>), then we have the sources of both primal drives, the erotogenic and the biogenic zones, and their link to aggression. And, therefore, we can consistently stay with the conceptualization of drives as somatopsychic and as *frontier concepts* or *border concepts* between the body and the mind.

The clinical implications of this shift in our conceptualization of aggression seem meaningful to me, for if we think of aggression as a primal drive or an irreducible motivation, we will search for it

<sup>9</sup> For further elaboration of these ideas, see Schmidt-Hellerau 2001.

as an *entity in itself*. We will then think about a gentle, passive patient by wondering, “But what about his aggression?” Or we will assume that he defends against or represses his aggression by being concerned about his objects, including the analyst. We may talk about his aggressive fantasies as if they are all he needs to acknowledge. Yet if we conceptualize aggression as an *intensification of the sexual or the preservative drive’s strivings*, we will always wonder where his aggression comes from, *what it is about*.

For example, a patient who is angry with me before a vacation break is not angry or aggressive because he exercises his aggressive drive or because he is motivated to be aggressive as such. He is angry because he feels threatened in his self-preservation and survival (Schmidt-Hellerau 2002, pp. 1280-1282), or because he feels defeated in his loving and sexual demands, and he therefore *intensifies his efforts to get through to me*—because the announcement of my vacation has already distanced me in his mind. What I would interpret to this patient and would want him to know is not only that he is aggressive (i.e., he has hostile fantasies)—often, the patient will know this quite well—but also that he feels so threatened in his safety, or challenged in his love, by my leaving that he wants to fight off this danger. With this interpretation, I show him that I am still with him, that I heard him, that he (his fear, his love) has reached me.

As is well known, the energy term for the sexual drive is *libido*; and all the investments along this line are called *libidinal*—thus, we assume that we create internally what we call a *libidinal object*.<sup>10</sup> Freud’s incapacity to find a suitable and convincing energy term for the self-preservative drive probably contributed to his eventually forgetting about it altogether, once he had subsumed it under the heading of Eros. In order to close this conceptual gap, I have suggested *lethe* as the long-missing energy term for the con-

<sup>10</sup> It is worthwhile noting that the term *object* is not limited to the real person out there. The representation of this person, the *object representation*, is a structure of our minds that can be the object of drive activity, e.g., when we think of or fantasize about a person. Green (1999) emphasizes this capacity of “transforming structures into an object” as the “objectalizing function” of the life drive (p. 85).



cept of a preservative drive (Schmidt-Hellerau 1997, 2005a). *Lethe* is a term borrowed from Greek mythology, meaning *forgetting*; thus, it fits the comparatively more inward-directed, silent, digestive, and quieting tendencies that I would assign to the functions of the preservative drive. This energy term enables us to call investments that predominantly originate from the preservative drive *lethic investments* and its objects *lethic objects*.

Differentiating between libidinal and lethic investments allows us to more clearly recognize whether the patient is relating to the analyst in the transference as an early caretaker or as an infantile love object. For instance, in the case of Amy, discussed above, we might ask: Do the patient's associations show a predilection for more *libidinal* or more *lethic* issues? Does Amy show a conflict between, or an unconscious confusion in, her object relations; that is, is her husband/analyst viewed as a *libidinal* or love object, or as a *lethic* object—that is, a nurturing object, or an object to be nurtured? In short, are her conflicts or confusions related to *love* or *care*? This example highlights the fact that to call all relatedness *libidinal* blurs the distinction between *preservative needs* and *erotic desires*.

## SELF AND OBJECT— WITH OR WITHOUT DRIVES

The relation to the object is central to psychoanalytic thinking. For Freud (1915a), it is the object “through which the drive is able to achieve its aim” (p. 122). The object may change, and the same object may serve “several drives simultaneously” (p. 123), yet without an object, there is no satisfaction. Thus, the infant is related to the object via his/her drives—an assumption that makes Freud's drive theory basically an object relations theory.

The paradigmatic situation to describe the onset of this relationship is that of the *hungry baby*. This situation provides a detailed model of how Freud envisioned structural development in general, and the emergence of *self* and *object* in particular (Freud 1895, 1900, 1911), and how drives and structures interact. The gen-

eral scheme says that when the infant is hungry (when a self-preservative drive stirs up a need for food), he/she screams and kicks, mother comes, understands the baby's needs, feeding takes place, and the hunger subsides—satisfaction is achieved, and the baby is, as it were, “safe.” According to Freud, the repetition of this same course of events leads to a *memory trace* within which all the essential elements of this experience are associated: the (partial) *drive* stimulus (hunger), the *perception* of the need-satisfying object (mother), and the specifics of the *motoric* action (screaming, sucking, burping). *A first mental structure has been formed.*<sup>11</sup>

As a result of this link that has thus been established, next time this need arises a psychical impulse will at once emerge which will seek to re-cathect the mnemonic image of the perception and to re-evoke the perception itself, that is to say, to re-establish the situation of the original satisfaction. An impulse of this kind is what we call a wish.  
[Freud 1900, p. 565]

From then on, the drives will be capable of activating representations of the emerging self with object, thus eliciting *the wish to be with the object*. It is an impressive though often discounted fact that most ideas on structure formation and the emergence of self and object representations, including a number of contemporary contributions, make use of this very same example, which Freud outlined in his “Project” (1895) and in the seventh chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). This proves that what Freud conceptualized as a drive activity is by no means regarded as irrelevant. For example, Lichtenberg (2003) envisions the emergence of the

<sup>11</sup> The first representations of self and object can be conceptualized as being more physical, or at least psychophysiological, since self and object are not yet clearly differentiated (Jacobson 1964, p. 40). Milrod (2002) states: “The development of the self representation resembles that of the object representation. Both arise simultaneously as islands of awareness that appear with distress and vanish with satisfaction. Anything which makes the infant aware of the outer world or non-self, makes him simultaneously aware of aspects of the self” (p. 12). Further, we can focus on the affective shift between distress and satisfaction, and call this a unit of “self- and object representation (and the affect dispositions linking them)” (Kernberg 1980, p. 17).

neonate's "sense of self" as triggered by the infant's "internally derived needs" (p. 499), namely, hunger and the mother's feeding response. He relates the emergence of the sense of self to the same experience stimulated by hunger; but he does not conceptualize this as drive activity, that is, as part of a self-preservative drive (hunger), calling it instead a *need*.

In fact, *need* seems much closer to our psychic experience, and Freud (1915a) actually once thought that it might be a "better term for a drive stimulus" (p. 118). So why didn't he, or why shouldn't we, definitively replace the "old-fashioned" notion of *drive* with *need*? I think that a risk of doing so lies in what language insinuates: the term *need* evokes the idea of an individual as a *passive recipient*, as someone whose needs have to be met by the object, while the notion of *drives* focuses on the subject's *active* side, his or her being *driven* to cry out and to *go for* what he/she needs—part of man's ceaseless *strivings*, his/her part of the game, his/her contributions to life and neurosis. As both notions address important yet different aspects, I would suggest keeping *drive* as the general notion, using *need* for the preservative, and *desire* for the sexual strivings. The term *drive* would thus address the two basic movements toward the satisfying object, while *need* and *desire* would specify the character and function of those strivings.

Fonagy et al. (2003) hold on to the active side of man. Their notion of the *self as agent* acknowledges agency—yet drives are not part of their vocabulary. Fonagy et al.'s *agentive self* is very different from what we understand by a *driven self*, since the latter includes not only a more primitive state of mind (with an ongoing impact on adult mental functioning), but also—most important in psychoanalysis—the unconscious side of man's being driven. Fonagy et al. suggest that "sometime during their second year, infants develop an *understanding of agency* that is already mentalistic: they start to understand that they are *intentional agents whose actions are caused by prior states of mind, such as desires*" (p. 421, italics added). Such an "understanding of agency" implies self-reflection, the awareness of a succession between "prior states of mind, such as desires" (which traditionally are ascribed to the sexual drives) and their translation into subsequent "intentional" acts.

Thus, the *self as agent* is to a large extent a conscious configuration, a structure within the ego. By contrast, a *driven self* is a self that is, indeed, driven—e.g., by hunger or sex—regardless of whether or not this self can already act specifically and successfully on this need/desire (the maturity aspect), and whether it knows about its being driven or not (the aspect of unconscious mental activity). *Driven self* speaks to a self as a structure within the id, superego, or ego that is activated and then *urges* man to *act* in some way.

I find Fonagy et al.'s minute elaboration of developmental steps, and, in particular, their concept of mentalization (Fonagy et al. 2002), very instructive—and in fact easily compatible with drive theory. Without the psychoanalytic concept of drives, however, their theory would risk losing its focus on and access to the dynamic unconscious processes that are unique to the psychoanalytic approach to mental life.<sup>12</sup>

I think that one important explanation for the widespread dissatisfaction with drive theory among analysts in the United States is that it is part of the (indirect) response to Freud's unfortunate decision to drop his notion of the self-preservative drive by merging it with Eros when he introduced aggression as a new primal drive in 1920. To construe all the infant's and adult's daily activities and interactions as the expression of an aggressive or sexual drive or their conflicts felt artificial, odd, or unconvincing. I wonder how psychoanalysis would have developed if Freud had stayed with and explored his first self-preservative drive?

<sup>12</sup> From a structural point of view, Smith (2005a) correctly emphasizes the importance of agency in our model of the mind: "If the desire for care and the excitement of sex can be collapsed so directly into a conflict between drives, might it be more difficult to find the patient's agency in the creation of his or her own experience?" (p. 345). Smith (2005b) sees compromise formation as made up of competing wishes, defenses, self-punishments, and painful affect, all negotiated by the person as agent. However, if we view agency as the ego's capacity to negotiate between the demands from the id, the superego, and the outside world, we then see the *ego* (a structure) as the locus of compromise formation; from this standpoint, drive theory tells us only *with what* energy these macrostructures work and what they have to negotiate in a particular moment, and it does not tell us about the capacity of the ego to exercise agency (choices, decision making, and so on).

We can understand much of an infant's needs and a lot of our daily activities and interactions as being basically *preservative*: not only are we driven to preserve ourselves, we are also driven to preserve our objects (Schmidt-Hellerau 2005a). Greenberg and Mitchell (1983) emphasize this very point (even though not as a drive activity) in reference to the early work of Sullivan:

The expression by the infant of his need calls out a reciprocal and complementary need impelling the caretaker to care for the infant's needs. The cry of the hungry baby arouses a tender feeling in the mother, accompanying the physical engorgement of the breasts with milk. *The baby needs to be fed; the mother needs to nurse.* [p. 92, italics added]

Sullivan and Fairbairn—at the foundation of contemporary relational psychoanalysis—declared classical drive theory to be wrong and instead shifted the emphasis to the object. While I would agree that the need is on both sides, baby's and mother's, I would disagree that our interest in object relations requires us to obliterate drive theory. In fact, there was a lingering sense in those who early on opposed Freud's drive theory that psychoanalysis does not work without it. Despite decisively criticizing the notion of *libido*, Fairbairn retained it as part of his thinking, and Greenberg (1991)—even though reluctantly—holds on to the notion of *drive*, suggesting two new drives, a *safety drive* and an *effectance drive*. Speculating that Freud was not interested in his self-preservative drive because it was “too peremptory” (p. 104), Greenberg seems to encompass similar territory with his *safety drive*. Yet, in defining his drives as purely *psychological* and emphasizing that “the somatic is external to the mind” (p. 117), Greenberg chooses to abandon Freud's “somatic strategy,” arguing that “for a somatic stimulus to be a stimulus it must first be the object of experience”; it must be “interpreted by a mind whose purpose is to interpret sensory data” (p. 117).

I would wonder what this “interpreter” is made of and how it developed the knowledge and capacity to interpret the body and its

sensory data or its demands. However, more than about these theoretical or philosophical questions. I would be concerned about splitting the psyche off from the somatic (Greenberg 1991, p. 117); such a declaration might lead to an illusion about the mind's freedom and independence from basic physiological processes, thus considerably limiting our perspective on the whole range of preservative and sexual issues that emerge from the body's demands and that are part of our psychic fabric. According to the tree metaphor mentioned earlier, this view would turn the drive into a tree without roots.

In the end, though, Greenberg's notion of drive as a "directedness that governs human behavior" (p. 118) does not look as dissimilar from Freud's view as he suggests. While not wanting to blur the differences between the conceptualizations mentioned above and classical drive theory, I find it intriguing that in one way or the other, the former all contain and preserve what the latter is about, thus strongly indicating that the *drive is not dead*; on the contrary, *the drive lives on*.

Freud defined the drives as a border concept between the biological and the psychological, and he built his model of the mind with just these two concepts, drive and structure, stating that drives activate ideas in order to effectively reach their aims. It follows that our ideas are merely the expressions of our drives (Freud 1910). This is actually quite a radical statement; it says that our bodily requirements are always part of the game, and whenever *any* idea pops up on the mind's inner screen, we can assume that a drive activated it. All psychic processes, the endless chain of our thoughts, associations, and feelings, express the dynamic movements between our various partial drives as represented by the structures they energize. To highlight this point, I should note that this conception implies that *the drives are the only energizers of mental structures and functions—and, therefore, they are indispensable*.

From here, it seems possible to respond in a heuristically fruitful way to a crucial question that we cannot avoid in any model of how the mind works: Why is *this* structure (fantasy, memory trace, representation), in this specific moment, activated—or created—

and not any other? And why does it lead to *this* next association—and not to any other? I think the only conclusive way to conceptualize and explain the specificity of *what comes to mind*, and the specific, consecutive, dynamic movement within our thought processes, is to note that *these ideas want to get us somewhere*; they express an ongoing drive activity. We often do not know at first what a specific drive activity is aiming for. It activates ideas in displacements, condensations, and other roundabout ways, including the whole range of defenses that interfere with the specifics of the dynamics between primary and secondary thought processes (Freud 1915b). Most often, the drive activity involves a slow sort of dreamlike elaboration of its final goal. However, without these strivings, without this dynamic interaction between the two basic antagonistic drives that create the psychic processes, we would be stuck with one idea and not get any further.

Also, the fact that an object representation—e.g., “Daddy”—is activated does not tell us what that particular representation means in this moment. “Daddy” might represent either a (lethic) wish for protection or a (libidinal) wish for love—to mention just two basic possibilities. Only if and when we refer back to the seemingly major ongoing drive activity is its specific meaning revealed. (We are usually not aware that this is what we are doing, metapsychologically speaking, when we try to understand what the patient’s material *is all about*.) It follows, then, that in order to know what we need, want, or desire, we have to have “thoughts” with which to represent it. And in order to understand what these thoughts and ideas *mean*, we have to learn about the specific drive activities that stirred them up.

I would say that, *from birth to death, we are driven*. At the beginning of life, there is no “knowledge” about the “what for” of our drives’ aims, and, later on, we do not realize that these many “whats” we have come to know about are what we are “driven to.” *Yet at every instant, we are where our drives take us*.

“Where am I?” my patient Amy wonders, lying on the couch. “It’s funny—I just saw myself in the kitchen, pulling the rack of lamb out of the oven. I was so excited! It looked perfect and it

smelled delicious. My heart was beating when I made the first cut. And I had this thought: I wished that *you* could see it; I wished you would have dinner with me tonight.”

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is interesting to note that, amongst all metapsychological concepts, it is Freud’s drive theory that has been most fiercely disputed. I wonder whether the rejection of drive theory indicates that we are still wrestling with the second (biological) and the third (psychological) of the big blows to human narcissism that Freud (1917) pointed out so clearly. We seem to be still reluctant to learn Darwin’s lesson—that “man is not a being different from animals,” but is an “animal descent” (Freud 1917, p. 141)—actually, a mutation of the monkey. This reluctance became apparent in June 2000, when Craig Venter and Francis Collins’s announcement that the human genome is 98.4 percent identical with the chimpanzee’s genome produced worldwide amazement. Of course, it is hard to think of ourselves as being driven in the same way that a monkey is. However, to obliterate drive theory from our psychoanalytic thinking seems to send us back to a period *before* Darwin. If 98.4 percent of our human genome propels a potential in mankind to act like a beast, then we need to learn as much as we can about this aspect of our motivations, which requires acknowledgment of our drives as rooted in the body in the first place.

It is no doubt clear that I strongly advocate staying in touch with and building on our classical psychoanalytic model of the mind, based on Freud’s metapsychology of *drive* and *structure*, elaborated since his time in many valuable contributions. While modern research has provided a lot of new data about structure formation that we can integrate into our thinking, I find that an open interest in what seems to me so specific for psychoanalysis—the drives’ impact on structure—is missing from our discourse. I believe that our understanding of drive activity is most vital and essential for understanding dynamic processes in psychoanalysis. A psychoanalytic model of the mind without drives is like a house



without people who live in it, who use and invest in its equipment in a specifically meaningful way. Without the concept of drives, it seems to me, our psychoanalytic understanding goes rather flat; it loses its depth, its connection to unconscious strivings and fantasies and to vital bodily needs, its dynamics, and its directedness. Therefore, I propose to turn our attention to modern drive theory, with its antagonism based on preservative and sexual drives, and to restart psychoanalytic research in this fascinating area of mental life.

Also, it is worth noting that, while many analysts seem to be uncomfortable with the supposedly old-fashioned notion of *drive*, modern neuroscience has no problem in employing it. See, for example, the following excerpt from a book entitled *Principles of Neural Science*:

The issues that surround drive states relate to survival. Activities that enhance immediate survival, such as eating or drinking, or those that ensure long-term survival, such as sexual behavior or caring for offspring, are pleasurable and there is a great natural urge to repeat these behaviors. Drive states steer behavior towards specific positive goals and away from negative ones. In addition, drive states require organization of individual behaviors into a goal-oriented sequence. Attainment of the goal decreases the intensity of the drive state and thus the motivated behavior ceases. A hungry cat is ever alert for the occasional mouse, ready to pounce when it comes into sight. Once satiated, the cat will not pounce again for some time. Finally, drive states have general effects; they increase our general level of arousal and thereby enhance our ability to act.

Drive states therefore serve three functions: they direct behavior toward or away from a specific goal; they organize individual behaviors into a coherent, goal-oriented sequence; and they increase general alertness, energizing the individual to act. [Kupfermann, Kandel, and Iversen 2000, p. 999]

If we consider psychoanalytic drive theory as I have outlined it in this article—that is, with self- and object preservation as well as

sexuality as primal drives—then it is striking how much commonality we find between neuroscientific principles, as outlined above, and psychoanalytic drive theory. Therefore, I want to encourage a new interest in our metapsychological model of psychic functioning. The harsh repulsion of metapsychology has deprived many of its adherents of a uniquely elaborated conception of psychic processes, one that Kandel (1999)—despite all criticism—calls “the most coherent and intellectually satisfying view of the mind” (p. 505). Its foundations were laid more than one hundred years ago, and they have been elaborately developed and expanded ever since—yet there still remains a lot to be discovered.

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## TRIADIC REALITY AND THE CAPACITY TO LOVE

BY JAMES M. HERZOG, M.D.

*The author describes the concept of triadic reality, which he sees as a necessary prerequisite to healthy negotiation of the oedipal phase. Without positive representations of both parents individually—and, significantly, of both parents together in relation to the child—the child is hampered in her efforts to achieve a sense of triadic reality, resulting in difficulties in self representation and in object choice, as well as a limited capacity to love.*

*A detailed case report is presented, highlighting relevant aspects of the author's work with a patient named Marielena.*

### Of Mere Being

The palm at the end of the mind,  
Beyond the last thought, rises  
In the bronze decor,

A gold-feathered bird  
Sings in the palm, without human meaning,  
Without human feeling, a foreign song.

You know then that it is not the reason  
That makes us happy or unhappy.  
The bird sings. Its feathers shine.

The palm stands on the edge of space,  
The wind moves slowly in the branches.  
The bird's fire-fangled feathers dangle down.

—Wallace Stevens (1997, pp. 476-477)

## INTRODUCTION

Individual cells develop embryonically in conjunction with those around them, evolving into various organs and conjointly functioning systems. Oncogenesis describes the growth pattern of cells where regulatory mechanisms have failed and growth is undisciplined and unstoppable. This model from pathophysiology seems applicable to me to my topic here: that is, the ways in which what precedes the Oedipus affects its shape and ways in which the situation and context in which it occurs affect its contours and its course.

I wish to suggest that the realities of the parental relationship, as well as the resultant and concomitant libidinal, aggressive, and narcissistic availability of each parent to his or her child, are decisive *Anlagen* of the emerging structure of the oedipal configuration. My thoughts are formulated in the tradition of Kohut's (1977) postulation that a cohesive self is the necessary prerequisite for optimal benefit from the conflicts inherent in the oedipal phase. They are also congruent with Britton's (1989) view of parental sexuality as the missing link in the Oedipus complex:

The acknowledgement by the child of the parents' relationship with each other unites his psychic world, limiting it to one world shared with his two parents in which different object relationships can exist. The closure of the oedipal triangle by the recognition of the link joining the parents provides a limiting boundary for the internal world. It creates what I call a "triangular space," i.e., a space bounded by the three persons of the oedipal situation and all their potential relationships. It includes, therefore, the possibility of being a participant in a relationship and observed by a third person as well as being an observer of a relationship between two people. . . .

If the link between the parents perceived in love and hate can be tolerated in the child's mind, it provides him with a prototype for an object relationship of a third kind in which he is a witness and not a participant. A third position then comes into existence from which object rela-

tionships can be observed. This provides us with a capacity for seeing ourselves in interaction with others and for entertaining another point of view whilst retaining our own, for reflecting on ourselves whilst being ourselves. [pp. 86-87]

### *Triadic Reality*

I define *triadic reality* as robust and interacting representations of self with mother, self with father, and self with mother and father together. These healthy representations result in the concept that the child is being jointly regarded by the parents, rather than individually appropriated by either for unrecognized sexual or aggressive need fulfillment. This concept of triadic reality can be seen to resemble both Kohut's and Britton's formulations, but it privileges the reality of the parent's co-management of sexual and aggressive dilemmas and opportunities and the parentogenic alliance as a factor in the elaboration of ensuing oedipal unfolding.

I propose that triadic reality before the Oedipus is necessary to structure and organize its occurrence, and that in the absence of such triadic reality, the shape of the Oedipus is altered in a way that predisposes to its problematic resolution and to further difficulties in subsequent development. This actuality or its absence is considered to be as decisive as the child's wish, fantasy, or particular developmental perspective.

## SELF REPRESENTATIONS AND PARENTAL REPRESENTATIONS

In a series of previous papers (Herzog 1980, 2004, 2005; Herzog and Herzog 1998; Herzog and O'Connell, unpublished), I have described my belief that the self develops optimally if robust representations are present of self with mother, self with father, and self with mother and father together. Such representations reflect actual interactive reality and are only constructed if the actual familial constellation favors their emergence (Herzog 2001). Eleanor Herzog and I (Herzog and Herzog 1998) reported on the analysis of a

child, Ned, who attempted to construct a new actual family, consisting of the analyst, his wife, and the patient, in order to develop a self-with-mother-and-father-together representation; we posited that entrance into the Oedipus was facilitated by such a construction, and that in its absence narcissistic fixation was a more likely outcome. We were particularly interested in Ned's need to construct this representation from actual objects; the fantasy of the parental couple alone seemed insufficient, and the need for a parental *us* (*we*-ness) was paramount.

More recently, I have suggested that narcissistic fixation, with accompanying appropriation of aspects of both sexuality and aggression, is encountered in children lacking a self-with-mother-and-father-together representation, and that denigration of the father by the mother in actuality may exacerbate such a propensity. In this situation, it is as if the child takes an aspect of his or her own anatomical and drive-related self as a proto-object relationship and then uses the accompanying sexualized unconscious fantasy as an attempted representation of the sexual/caretaking couple. This fantasy is almost always contemptuous, contains a generous aliquot of unmodulated aggression, and involves the denigration of the other—if another is admitted at all into the child's play space (Herzog 2004). The introduction of psychoanalytic intervention for such children has a high degree of therapeutic success, as new representations are constructed that mirror actual interactions and evolving patterns of play.

I shall try to further explicate my theme by describing selected aspects of an analytic endeavor undertaken by Marielena, who came to talk with me as a freshman in college and who stayed at our work for the next four years. Her situation does not primarily indicate the origin and fate of a narcissistic disturbance; rather, I believe that it demonstrates the ways in which the actuality of the passions and intimate relationship of the caretaking couple, or the lack of these and their investment in others, influences the ways in which the child approaches the Oedipus and negotiates the avenues of its interior and its destinal possibilities.

I wish to propose that the capacity to choose whom to love, with its attendant issues of both aggressive and libidinal deployment, is



highly dependent on the actual interactive milieu in which the child develops and on the actual loving and aggressive alliances and transferences that characterize the parental couple and their subsequent availability to their child. This capacity to choose in turn tutors the capacity to love.

I hypothesize that the child must have both (parents)—that is, a good enough self-with-mother-and-father-together representation—in order to be able to choose either, that is, to make an object choice. A good enough self-with-mother-and-father-together representation is constructed when the parents are lovers, friends, and co-participants in a parentogenic alliance. This state of affairs, a good enough self-with-mother-and-father-together representation and a good enough self-with-mother and a good enough self-with-father representation, is how I define *triadic reality*.

It is a further fundamental proposition of my thinking that this triadic reality precedes entry into the Oedipus. In the absence of this kind of preoedipal triadic reality, a child's inherent intrapsychic bisexuality is appropriated by unremitting object and couple hunger, and her evolving superego development is also impacted. Both loving and hating feelings are less clear, and simultaneously less amenable to modulation and integration. (This hypothesis is, of course, in a sense "platonic"; as with all developmental conjectures derived from analytic experience rather than prospective study, it is not absolute and is probably more idiographic than nomothetic.)

## CLINICAL VIGNETTE

Marielena arrives already highly interested in psychoanalysis as the result of a close and multifaceted friendship with a mentor, Osvaldo, a filmmaker, whose life was greatly ameliorated by his psychoanalytic experience. His enthusiasm and support have always mattered immensely to Marielena. She describes Osvaldo as sort of like her father—certainly in age, but "oh-so-different." This remark proves to be a phenomenal understatement and yet completely the truth. Who Osvaldo is and how he figures into the de-

velopment of Marielena's inscape is of monumental importance. Marielena arrives determined to make psychoanalysis work for her, too.

Marielena is a big girl. She stands six feet tall and is muscular and strong in appearance. Her blonde, curly hair and her tanned and healthy-looking complexion make me initially wonder why she has come to my office, clearly an odd thought. She looks "too healthy" to need analysis. Later, I would realize that from the first moment of our meeting, I was being ushered into a psychic state in which the appearance of the body was meant to distract from the reality of the inscape and had, indeed, been meant to preempt and even appropriate psychic reality.

Marielena tells me about her family. The story is painful. Her mother is Norwegian and from a very problematic and dysfunctional family. There has been alcoholism in the family for many generations—excesses and abuses under its aegis, I am told. Mother became a physician and specializes in neurological surgery. Father is from South America and of a mixed racial background. His extended family was composed of both slaves and slave owners in the past, I am told, and he has become a fiercely effective labor lawyer. Marielena tells me that she suspects he has always secretly favored management. "The acorn does not fall far from the oak," she says—smiling, I think, about her insight. "There is much illegitimacy in his family," she adds. "Children were born in and out of wedlock; miscegenation characterized multiple generations."

I learn that both of her parents are very attractive physically: mother is petite, light, blonde, and sunny in appearance, and father is swarthier, but also slight of build. I remark to myself that Marielena must tower over them, and then feel more in synch with my patient-to-be when she says, "I am a giant compared to them." I ask how it is to be a giant. "It has always been a problem" is her reply.

Marielena goes on to tell me that her parents do not get on very well with each other, and that her mother has told her they have not slept together for many years. She thinks that her father has had many girlfriends. "Men can always get it up," she tells me. "My father is a spectacular dancer and athlete as well." And: "What

do women do in such a situation?" she muses. "I wonder," I respond.

Marielena then tells me that she has an eating problem: she is bulimic. She is not sure about her sexuality, and struggles with the fact that her parents have plans for her that are different from those she herself has authored. They think that she should become either a doctor or a lawyer. But she wants to make films, following in the footsteps of her beloved Osvaldo. "Besides which," she says, "I am very unhappy much of the time—not that I have a biological depression, but rather that I have so many conflicts and so much pain." These are the reasons why she wants analysis.

I find myself thinking that it would be interesting to learn more about all these issues. I juxtapose this thought with my earlier notion that this goddesslike young woman is too healthy to need analysis. I have some vague thought about the relationship of mind and body, and then of minds and bodies. I feel somewhat startled and not a little taken aback to discover my thought that I never would have guessed that Marielena's parentage involved African as well as European progenitors. I find myself wondering why I wondered. Again, I have the thought that external appearance and the appearance of one's parents might be very different. I remember also wondering about Osvaldo: what he looked like, his size and coloring. That I thought of him at all also seems noteworthy to me.

After further discussion and three more vis-à-vis meetings, Marielena and I commence working together. I shall present the first hour of the analysis, an hour from the third year, and material that followed. All this is designed to show the work that Marielena undertook to create an analytic oedipal situation that would facilitate her further development, and that reflected, of course, the complex situation in which her actual intrapsychic elaboration and inscape construction had occurred.

### *The First Hour of the Analysis*

Marielena arrives for her first hour, which takes place a week after we last met. I am immediately struck by how different she

looks. Whereas I considered during the previous weeks that there might be a goddess in my consulting room, I now worry about how un-put-together she looks. She wears a tank top, out of which she seems to be emerging, and a pair of cutoff shorts, which she also seems to spill out of. During the previous weeks, she wore a tailored suit.

"I am getting on the couch right away" are her opening words, and she proceeds to recline. I somewhat uncomfortably notice that her breasts are completely visible, given her outfit and her posture. "I had a dream last night," she begins. "I was dancing and dancing, and I was watching myself dancing. I noticed that the dance was graceful and elegant. Then I looked at my breasts—they were petite and perky. Immediately, I knew that although I was watching myself dance, it wasn't really me. My breasts are much larger, as you can plainly see." I think about her earlier comment that she is a giant, that her mother and father are petite, and about her state of uncoveredness. I feel uncomfortable, wanting to cover her up, but decide that the best course of action is simply to listen.

Marielena continues to speak. "Osvaldo thinks that I am very pretty and that I am smart. He is my most ardent admirer. He does not think that I am immense. He got me into lacrosse, tennis, and softball. I love playing sports. I always have to wear a jogging bra because my breasts are so large. My father hates the fact that I am so big. He says to me, 'Just because I was born near the Amazon does not mean that you have to *be* an Amazon.'"

I feel sad as Marielena begins to associate to her dream. I realize that both she and her breasts now seem much smaller to me. I associate to how lovely my daughter was as a little girl, and how lovely she is now as a grown woman. I wonder about my thoughts. Things looming large, things being made smaller. Whose daughter is Marielena, I wonder to myself, and then I wonder why I am wondering.

Marielena continues, "Papa liked me better until I began to develop. Then I just got to be too big. Sometimes he would say, 'Just stop eating, Lena'—he calls me 'Lena.'" Now she begins to cry. "I'm sorry that I'm crying. Things are such a mess! I am such a mess."

At this point, she readjusts her tank top and her breasts are no longer visible. She feels better put together. "I think that the girl dancing is who I was supposed to be: tiny like my parents, rather than an Amazon. Sometimes they say that I am just too much to handle, that every part of me is too big." I feel a curious sensation as she says this, noticing that I have found her ample breasts beautiful, not too large, even though I wish that she had not needed to show them to me. I say, "There seems to be a lot going on in your mind and in your feelings. I think you are wondering how we will handle all of this together." I am aware that I have been feeling something about the *physical*, and yet I am saying something about her *feelings, anxieties, and concerns*. Am I defending, avoiding, displacing, mentalizing, rather than accepting the physical?

To my astonishment, interest, and pleasure, Marielena responds to my comment by saying, "Yes, I think that the dream is not just about my body or my mother's. It is about all the things you just stated." I consider saying something about her comment that she is a mess, but I do not really know what to say. Just as I initially thought her a goddess, I now notice my delight that she seems to think the dream is a representation of some complex and important part of her inscape. Perhaps something is going on in which I want to deify her or idealize her or parentify her.

Now I realize that I want to say something more. I say: "Whatever feels like a mess, we can try to learn more about here. Some part of it made you cry. Sometimes it helps to have another person thinking about these things with you. In the dream, were you dancing alone or with another?"

There is a short period of silence. The hour is not finished yet; Marielena has something more to say. "Oh, I am never all by myself here. Osvaldo is always present. I assume that I was dancing with him in the dream. He likes the way I move. It is true, though, that I couldn't actually see him—but I'm certain he was there." Then more silence, after which Marielena adds: "Maybe I seemed petite and elegant because Osvaldo is tall. Were I dancing with him, I would seem just the right size." There is more silence, during which I remember but do not say that Marielena has de-

scribed Osvaldo as her most ardent admirer, and that the word *ardent* caught my attention. Then Marielena says: "If you are here, too, then there are three of us here."

After this first hour, I think to myself that something is being conveyed about dyadic and triadic reality. This threesome seems to consist of the very important Osvaldo, the newly arrived analyst, and Marielena herself. Aloneness, beauty, the mother's body versus her own or as her own, and the recognition of the difference between wish and anatomical reality are all present. I further observe that I entered into all of this with a countertransference stance that seemed to involve first idealization, and then realization that what I felt and what was actually present were not necessarily one and the same. I note that I did not have a sense of the parental couple or of a family of mother, father, and child. Is my parental feeling, as evident in thoughts of my own daughter, related to this sense that Marielena did not grow up in a nuclear family, and why do I have this sense at all?

### *An Hour from the Third Year of Analysis*

Marielena is now a junior in college. We have been meeting five times a week since her freshman year, punctuated by summer and vacation breaks. I have come to know much more about the workings of her mind and of her family.

We have spent a lot of time reconstructing the relationship between the patient's mother and herself, which is often physical. They continue to sleep together when Marielena is at home and when mother comes to visit her at school. We have come to understand this striking behavior, which has existed for as long as Marielena can remember, as reflecting mother's need. In some way, it is meant to heal the mother's childhood abuse, which seems to have been both physical and sexual. Mother often moans and screams in her sleep, and is always comforted when her daughter awakens her to say that everything is all right. Interestingly, at such times, mother says to her daughter: "You are big and strong, like a goddess, to take care of me this way. I could not survive without you." Marielena and I have made some connections between her ambiva-

lence about her size, and mother's need to have her be a giant in the night. The bulimia seems to be connected to this conflict and dilemma.

Marielena cannot remember ever seeing her parents in bed together. This now seems noteworthy, although as a child, she thought that mommies and daddies simply did not sleep together.

We have learned a great deal about Osvaldo, too, including our growing understanding that he and Marielena's father are very close. Perhaps this closeness is physical, perhaps spiritual. What Marielena says is that it is the kind of closeness that does not exist between her father and her mother.

Marielena loves Osvaldo. In some way, it seems, Osvaldo can celebrate Marielena, while her father principally denigrates her. Over this period of time, Marielena has felt sad; sometimes she is clear, but sometimes succumbs to the situation's inherent ambiguity. "My family consists of mother, father, and Osvaldo," she says. "How my father and Osvaldo are connected, I am not sure, but that they *are* connected is beyond question. Osvaldo is also connected to me and I to him." She goes on to note that "One's provenance matters."

### *The Second Hour*

Marielena relates: "I am completely engrossed by the book *Redtails in Love* [in which the characters are hawks]. It feels lately as though I am not talking about anything else. I believe that I have a crush on a character in the book, a hawk named 'Pale Male.' He takes a licking and keeps on ticking. Actually, I think I am like Pale Male. It is so strange—I am not dark like my father and I'm big, whereas my maternal grandfather was tiny, even though he terrorized my mother when she was young. I wanted to say to them that size matters, but didn't because it sounds foolish—like, you know, what guys say about penis size. I didn't realize when I was a little girl that my father was so short. He seemed very big to me, and his penis did, too. I would often see him naked, whenever he went swimming." (Pause.)

The patient continues, "I have to talk to you some more about Sarita [a friend]. I get so blue when she goes out with Hans [another friend], and yet I spring into action when the two of them have a fight. I want Sarita all to myself, and I also want them to be together. You know how I have told you that girls kiss better than guys do. It is so great to kiss Sarita and to have her kiss me. But nothing below the waist with a girl, absolutely nothing. Martin [another friend] would like to touch me there. I think that I might like that, too. Somehow, I just can't believe that it would be all right."

"You've said that your mother always said, 'Never let a man touch you there,'" I remind her.

"Well, of course, she *would* say that, given her history, but as you have always said, we are trying to sort out the dancer from the dance," Marielena responds. "My mother's history is not mine."

"'Provenance matters,' you've also said," I now mention, "but it is not the whole story."

"Sarita is so different from my mother. Her Hispanic background is omnipresent. She has explained to me that even though her family is Argentinian, they are Sephardic Jews. Did you know that there are both Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews? Before I came to college, I knew nothing about Jews, nothing except the horrible stuff about the Holocaust. Mother says that there were very few Jews in Norway, but that Hitler wanted to kill even them. Sarita's family is not observant. I find her so lovely. She is dark, and sometimes when I think about being with her, I think I am Pale Male, the hawk in my book, and she is Chocolate—not First Love, but Chocolate. Those are the names of the female hawks whom Pale Male shares a nest with. Sometimes I wish that I could kiss Sarita and have Martin touch me at the same time."

I say: "To be with both a woman and a man," to which Marielena answers, "Yes, yes—Pale Male and First Love together and making little hawks and feeding them and taking care of them! That is what I want, I mean *wanted*, I mean *want*. But it is not so simple for me now. I think I want Sarita even more than I want Martin. I am actually hopefully confused."



"What?" I ask. And Marielena repeats, "I am hopefully confused. Wait, I think I meant to say *hopelessly* confused, but now I am not sure. I don't want to be lesbian, but I probably am; and I want to want Martin, but I don't, and always—*always*—there is Osvaldo."

"How does he come to mind now?" I ask. "I don't know, but he always does; he is always with me," she replies. "It's like he was my actual parent, and he had a relationship with my father. I can't say that they were or are actually lovers—I don't know. But I do know that he loved me and took care of me, almost as if he were my *mother*. My mother and he didn't get along so well, but she actually was no more distant from him than she was from my father. Then there was me: me with mother, me with father, and me with Osvaldo. The problem is trying to picture me with two of them, any two of them together. Doesn't this sound weird? Poor giant girl with three parents instead of two! There is some bond of affection and connection between the two men, and nothing between either man and my mother. I just had the thought that I am a giant amongst pygmies, sort of like Gulliver in the land of the Lilliputians. I don't know if I ever told you this, but when I first met you and saw that you were over six feet tall, I felt so relieved. 'At last,' I thought, 'I am not the only giant in the land.' You know, Osvaldo gets in the way, sort of. I would be dead in the water without him, but he won't do as a substitute for Martin."

"Is Sarita a substitute, too?" I ask. "What do you mean!" she responds. "I love Sarita. Actually, I love Osvaldo, too. Do you mean, is one of them standing for my mother and the other for my father, and if the two of them are both there, then I can be a little girl in a usual family?"

"I was wondering," I say.

"I want to change the subject," declares Marielena. "I really like Samantha on 'Sex and the City.' Most of the guys I know like the fact that she fucks like a man. I like that she is full sized, not petite and tiny. Osvaldo once said that I am just the right size for love. Do you think so, too?"

"Are you asking me about your loving capacity?" I ask. "Well, maybe," she answers. "I don't actually know what I was asking, but

let's say I was. Am I the right size to love? I think that the answer to that question would have to be yes. Do you agree? Wait before you answer; this is getting interesting. I would say that the right size to love has something to do with the pictures in your mind of who loves whom. I have my mother loving me, especially when I hold her in the night. I have my father and Osvaldo loving each other, and I have Osvaldo loving me. Those pictures might be enough. Wait still longer—I have another picture in my mind! It is of you and me. I think that this is about love, too. I just had a thought that Pale Male—no, that cannot be true,” she concludes, interrupting herself.

“What?” I ask.

Marielena goes on, “Well, something about his coloring versus my father's. I actually thought that Pale Male might look a lot like you. You are my beloved hawk. This is embarrassing me and now it is getting worse. I just thought that Martin's penis is probably smaller than yours and that Hans looks somewhat like you, too.”

I think about how to respond, knowing that I want to acknowledge the erotic feelings being expressed and the important questions relating to size and to similarities and differences. I say: “Intense feelings are developing here in the analysis, in you for me, and you are wondering how they are related to what was or wasn't felt between your parents and between your father and Osvaldo.”

Marielena interrupts what I am saying to add: “Yes, what I feel for you is more like what I felt for Osvaldo, but it's so confusing. Who is Osvaldo? He was always a member of our family. He was passionate and ardent. He had an analysis. He is dark like my father, but tall like me and you. You know, Pale Male had a number of wives—mates, I guess I should say—but they were serial spouses. I could not really tell who was with whom in my family; it was sort of like musical chairs. I was with Mama. Daddy was with Osvaldo, and Osvaldo was with me.”

“There was confusion about the generations, and there was confusion about the couplings,” I say. “I wonder if these questions about penis size, and about breast size as we encountered that in your first dream, aren't also questions about who is the grown-up

and who is the child, who is big and who is little in that sense, as well as in the sense of anatomical magnitude."

Marielena starts to cry. "I used to think that my daddy was big," she sobs. "I never thought that my mommy was. Then it began to seem that my daddy was small, too, and that the only big person in our family was Osvaldo, until I started to get bigger and bigger."

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At this point, I would like to propose that the contours of Marielena's Oedipus were profoundly reflective of the actualities of her family situation. As the analysis continued, Marielena felt ever better about herself, and gained greater and greater control over her eating. Her radiant beauty attracted many admirers, and yet she felt an irresistible pull to stay with her friends Sarita and Hans. They became a threesome, going everywhere together. She and Sarita continued to kiss, and the patient would talk with me about how clearly this constituted a repetition, and how compelling a hold it had on her. She also felt an interest in Hans, and would often say, "I just can't choose—I just can't choose!"

Eventually, the day comes when a tearful Marielena tells me that Sarita thinks she wants to marry Hans, but she worries about how this would be for her best friend, Marielena herself. "I have always known that this day would come," my patient sobs. "Of course, I won't stand in the way, but it feels unbearable! I had the thought that I might now join *your* family," she says to me. "I assume you have a wife," she adds hesitantly.

I point out to Marielena that she has never wondered aloud about my domestic arrangements or any other aspect of my life outside the consulting room. In response, she comments, "I am hopelessly enmeshed in the twosome of you and me, as well as all the others at school and at home. And all the while, hopefully, continuously, wanting to be able to live in a threesome." How true this is, even as Marielena struggles to escape from what feels like a relational prison.

I conjecture that Marielena suffers from an absence of being jointly thought about by her mother and father together, an ab-

sence of residing in the conjoint play space of the parental mind. Such an absence is the functional antecedent, as well as the invariable correlative, of the absence of a self-with-mother-and-father-together representation in the child's mental structure.

This is evident in the patient's following comments: "How can I even think about anybody else in your life? What would that mean? *Who* else? If you had a wife—which, of course, I know you do, or at least I hope you do—how could you also be with me? If you had children, how could you care for me? I know nothing about how two people together care about a child, or for that matter, *any* third person. It is not in my experience, even though I try to care about Sarita and Hans. But, as you know, on some level I hate Hans, and I hate that Sarita loves him. When we all go to the movies and Hans puts his arm around Sarita, I want to grab her hand and say, 'No, be close to *me*, not *him!*' And, at other times, I have wanted Hans to reach for me in the same way. What *is* this inability to choose? Maybe if you told me about your wife and about your relationship with her, I could learn what I do not know. Maybe I would just hate your wife, and I'd say, as I would like to say to Sarita, 'Forget her'—or in Sarita's case, 'Forget him and be with me, just be with *me!*' Even better, maybe, is that I should meet your wife, see the two of you together, watch how you touch each other, how you speak together, even how you make love. Yes, if I could actually see her and you together, then I would have a picture of a loving couple. But that would *still* not be enough; she would have to love me, too. I would need the two of you, who love each other, to *both* love me . . . in order . . . in order to, I think—in order to be able to love—Martin. It sort of surprises me that I say *Martin*, but I would *so* like to be able to love him, and to feel normal and usual and real."

We work on, and Marielena struggles with whether or not she can picture me with my wife. This seems momentous and as though it might be connected, too, to the problem of choosing. She begins to think that my wife might be a filmmaker. We both wonder about the reasons for this, and we both note that Osvaldo is a filmmaker. Marielena pictures my wife as tall, maybe Scandinavian,

and probably—this is most important—very loving. My wife cannot possibly be traumatized in the way that Marielena's mother is, and that means she must have had a good enough father and a good enough mother.

This formulation leads to enormous anguish as the patient posits that neither of her parents had parents who were good enough or who actually cared for each other: "My mother's mother and father hated each other, and so they couldn't both care for my mother together. The same was true of my father's parents. No wonder my mother and father couldn't do it for me! I have an inherited disease which has been transmitted through many generations. There is no cure—just transmission and suffering."

Marielena says that she thinks a psychoanalyst and a filmmaker would make a good couple. Both must be both scientific and artistic, and both, in a sense, speak the same language. Suddenly, she is overwhelmed with a feeling of sadness as she thinks about Osvaldo and the fact that he is single. He has never married, and although he has an intimacy with her father, he is often alone. "It is unbearable to not be in a couple!" she cries, "but it is impossible to be in one, too."

Marielena now entertains the fantasy that my wife and I are making a film about her, her friends at college, and her parents' strange arrangement and multigenerational sadness and dysfunction. She imagines that it will resemble *Black Orpheus*, but thinks that it should be called *Black Oedipus*. It is the first time she has mentioned Oedipus, and I am, of course, curious. She tells me about the drama—about Jocasta, and especially about the cruelty of Laius. Sophocles' drama is only the starting point of our story, however. We briefly consider Antigone and Electra, but then find ourselves in the barren, cold Norwegian landscape and the fecund, torrid Brazilian terrain.

"*Frío-caliente*," Marielena says in Spanish. "There is no mixing of the two in *this* story. It's like the Arctic and the tropics—the character of Black Oedipus either freezes or burns. You know how women who are menopausal have hot flashes; well, Black Oedipus shivers all the time because he should be in Africa, but has been

shackled and transported to a colder place. And his mate is like one of those fish who have cryoglobulins or something in their blood, which requires that they swim in the coldest waters, and so she has swum to the Caribbean or some other *agua caliente*. The two of them can never swim together. That is the story of Black Oedipus. No, wait—there's more. Their daughter wants so much for them to be together, but she hates both of them because they *cannot* be together. Actually, I have no idea why the movie would be called *Black Oedipus*; probably it would be better to simply call it *Black*. I just think that psychoanalysts are interested in the Oedipus. I feel very sad; I think that I called the movie *Black Oedipus* because I thought that would be an interesting topic for you and your wife. You see, I cannot imagine two people together being interested in me—unless, as in this case, I were to make it worth their while.”

We explore Marielena's feeling that she is pathetic and that she is also engaged in the analysis and still trying; both stances, we think, contain defensive and adaptive aspects. Then we return to the notion that the parental couple might be a psychoanalyst and a filmmaker. We think that the closest approximation Marielena has known to such a couple is the filmmaker Osvaldo and her father. Are they or are they not a couple, she wonders, and can a homosexual couple create a good enough joint space in which to contemplate and offer residence to their child? “But I am not their child,” she goes on. “I am the child of my mother and father, and they could not create such a space.”

We are learning something of the origins and meanings of Marielena's so called lesbianism and of my wife's putative profession. Eventually, Marielena points out that the new element is the psychoanalyst as a member of the couple. He borrows from Osvaldo who was himself analyzed, but he is someone new.

Marielena's excitement grows as she now considers that passion exists between my wife and me. “Of course it does! You are a sexual person,” she comments. “I can feel that. I feel sexual when I am here. I have those feelings for you. I could make love with you, have you touch me below, feel your penis inside of me. How would I work that out? I want you—she has you. What is the solu-

tion? Have I made matters even worse for myself by imagining these things? Thank God, it's just a movie we're talking about. It has too much *black* something—humor, maybe—for my taste.”

I comment that I think Marielena is hard at work—that her movie is about us and that it is for her. I note that she has had to know the first script, which involved the Arctic and tropical non-miscible waters, and then trust enough to contemplate a new script, which partakes of her past, Osvaldo, and incorporates our present, the analysis.

“I’ll share my Oscar with you,” Marielena jokes. “But will I also have to allow Luciana to come up on the stage with us?” I wonder for a brief second who Luciana is; then it becomes clear. “Will I want to? Well, I guess I will; she is, after all, the filmmaker. I have just written the script—or is it *we* who have written the script? That is the question. I shall say it is we who have written the script. You, I, and she are the writers; we are the *we*.”

Of course, I now know that Luciana is my very tall, erotically alive, co-caring wife—the filmmaker. Marielena is creating a new sexual and caretaking couple, as well as a new movie, in her internal cinema. It is indeed about Oedipus—but why *black*?

As if anticipating the question that I have not uttered, she goes on to say: “I am blonde on the outside, and everyone thinks it odd that a Nordic-looking girl is called *Marielena*. But, you know, I am also black—there were African slaves in my father’s family.”

“You are a combination of so many things,” I say, now knowing that the created woman, Luciana, my wife, is not only tall like her daughter, but also Brazilian as well as Scandinavian, also black as well as blonde, a mother created in Marielena’s own image as well as in mine and hers and mine together. The film is veridical in terms of the patient’s inscape in all its aspects.

It actually did not come as a surprise to me when, some months later, Marielena told me that she and Martin had slept together, and she revealed for the first time that he, too, was a combination of many elements. His mother was German and his father, Japanese. Nor was I surprised when Marielena shyly wondered whether I was Sephardic, like Sarita, or Ashkenazi. “I always

assumed that you are Jewish,” she said, “even though you look Nordic. German, I guess. You are my Pale Male, you know—not swarthy like Osvaldo or Sarita. But I know that you must be a combination of many elements, too. You are loving and smart, but also unavailable, and so big. You are huge, I think. Is it really possible that you are over seven feet tall?”

I commented that movies often feature special effects, and that I hoped my great size was facultative in our joint production. I thought to myself about the repeated appearances of idealization in the treatment, both on Marielena’s part and my own, and of the portrayal of the generational confusion: Who is the child, and who is the parent utilizing the metaphors of size and the overwhelming importance of special effects in the idiographic development and subsequent analysis of every patient?

“I think that your size really is important,” Marielena said. “The analysis does produce many special effects. Of course, size matters vitally to a little girl, and I am just thinking that my having grown the way I did may have been truly troubling to my father, who had so much trouble with his own mother, and possibly comforting to my mother, who could have used a large woman’s protection when she was little. But here I have needed you to be the big father, and now to have a big wife as well. It is like I need Dr. Hawk and Luciana to be together and loving—and, almost like my parents, in order that I may love you and then love Martin, too.”

## DISCUSSION

The child who is possessed by one parent as the needed or seduced other, or by each parent separately in that manner, is deprived of the protective and facilitating experience of being recognized and loved by the parental couple together. The child who is fortunate enough to inhabit a space cocreated by the parentogenic alliance forged by a mother and father who love each other and can recognize their child as separate and unique is particularly blessed in her ensuing developmental journey. The specific situational characteristics of the child’s actual interactive *Spielraum* matter immensely in this regard.



In the absence of facilitating self-with-mother, self-with-father, and self-with-mother-and-father-together representations—the definitional fundament of triadic reality—entry into the Oedipus is distorted, reflecting the *desetayage* (Braunschweig and Fain 1981) or skewing that has characterized the actual attachments, affective resonances, and bonds that make up the family. In my experience, although superego development is necessarily affected by these circumstances, the primary venue for the manifestation of these early relationships and their curtailment is found in the capacity to make meaningful object choices and to enter into loving and committed relationships with the chosen object. It is as if uncertainty replaces other avenues of epigenesis, often masquerading as emancipated bisexuality or polymorphous perversity. In fact, to sort out the nature of one's intrapsychic representation of self with each gender and the advantages and disadvantages of focusing one's sexuality, it appears to be necessary that one has experience with the safety to choose that is afforded by a good enough self-with-mother-and-father together representation. As stated earlier, it is as if one must have both in order to choose either.

Children of all ages are resilient. Psychoanalysis allows for the making of new movies, which are permitted screening even in the presence of old films. I believe that an attempt is always made to devise a new screenplay, even as the old one is incredibly and painfully present. Thus, for the first three-plus years of her analysis, Marielena could not allow herself to even imagine that I had a partner in passion and all other endeavors. That was the old script. Of course, it tutored the transference and the analytic play. But Marielena did not give up. Like all her analytic sisters and brothers, she kept on trying.

As we unraveled and reconstructed the tortuous multigenerational saga of the patient's family and its eventual culmination in the estrangements and affections amongst her mother, her father, Osvaldo, and herself, she was able to begin a new undertaking. Thus, *Black Oedipus* was conceived, and the production was brought to a resolution that permitted her to return to a developmental path, which in turn facilitated her "fuller deck functioning" (Herzog and O'Connell, unpublished) and a greater capacity

to play. She said that this meant the capacity to choose and thus to love, and I thought that this could not be better stated; we agreed that her observation was exactly right.

Marielena had constructed a new psychoanalytic parental couple: first in displacement, with her feelings toward Sarita and Hans, and then in the analysis, utilizing the analyst and his wife. From these couples, she created a new intrapsychic representation of *self with mother and father together*. This new construction afforded her the opportunity to allow her inherent intrapsychic bisexuality to become a source of empathy and creativity, rather than its having to be appropriated as a ravenous engine that drove the never-ending need to secure the unavailable object and the non-existent primary couple. Now Marielena could choose another, could feel desire, and could consummate her wish for intimacy and connection. The analysis, which she had so fiercely pursued, facilitated her construction of a new psychoanalytic triadic reality and ushered in a new oedipal opportunity, culminating in her capacity to choose and to love.

There are, of course, two participants in every analysis. Marielena was accompanied in her intimate analytic dialogue by a child analyst, and, therefore, the *Spielraum* privileged both playing and the role of actuality as crucial constituents of psychic reality. The play was directed by Marielena, and thus, the film that was created reflected both the realities and the fantasies of her inscape. At one point, she pondered the possibility that Osvaldo could actually have been her biological father, only to relegate such a hypothesis to the realm of both longing and dread. Play itself (Frankel 1998; Herzog 2005) becomes the transformative process when the analytic space is so configured. Marielena was not only a gifted playwright, but also a gifted player. In the presence of her (child) analyst, the work proceeded.

## CONCLUSION

Almost thirty years ago, Evoleen Rexford, then the editor emeritus of the *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry*, discussed my paper, "Sleep Disorder and Father Hunger" (Herzog

1980), at the Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute's monthly scientific meeting. She chose to illustrate her agreement with my postulation of the father's crucial role in the modulation and organization of the aggressive drive and fantasy by telling the story of a four-year-old boy, in whose play material the father was omnipresent. Dr. Rexford impressed this author and the audience immensely when she revealed that said father had died in the European theater during the Second World War, when her patient was a newborn, and had been present in his growth and development solely in his mother's vivid descriptions of who the father had been and would have been, had he lived.

I close with this recollection in order to address the reality that internal representations of a missing parent or of the parental couple can, of course, be conveyed to the child as he or she develops. How representations differ from actual lived experience is an empirical question that psychoanalysis has approached putatively, but not researched operationally (Herzog 2001). In the same spirit, I would like to reiterate that Marielena's story, reconstructed as it was in the psychoanalytic situation, does not allow us to prognosticate what effects the absence of a caretaking couple with a good enough parentogenic alliance would have on any other child. Rather, her story suggests hypotheses relevant to the capacity to choose and the fate of constitutional bisexuality, just as an earlier paper of mine (Herzog 2004) suggested other sequelae to absent or eccentric self-with-father and self-with-father-and-mother-together representations. Further research, both psychoanalytic and that emanating from other disciplines, will help establish both the differences between actuality and parental representational reality, and the consequences of presence or absence of either of the aforesaid.

## EPILOGUE

A mythology reflects its region. Here  
 In Connecticut, we never lived in a time  
 When mythology was possible—But if we had—  
 That raises the question of the image's truth.

The image must be of the nature of its creator.  
 It is the nature of its creator increased,  
 Heightened. It is he, anew, in a freshened youth  
 And it is he in the substance of his region,  
 Wood of his forests and stone out of his fields  
 Or from under his mountains.

Wallace Stevens (1997, p. 476)

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## TO REPRESS: A NOTE ON AN AMBIGUITY OF MEANING

BY EUGENE J. MAHON, M.D.

*An analysand used the word repress in a dream in an unusual way. In the dream, a record had been re-pressed: it was not the original disc but a copy. This manifest meaning of the word led associatively to more latent meanings. A kind of dialectical process ensued whereby, whenever the concept of repression came up, several meanings had to be considered to set the record straight. The classical way of thinking about repression had been augmented a little by this novel meaning that the analysand had stumbled on in his dream. Psychoanalytic process was enriched by this ongoing scrutiny of repression in theory and practice.*

### THREE MEANINGS OF *REPRESSED*

Recently, an analysand used the word *repressed* in a way that the analyst had never heard before, or at least had never really considered before. The word appeared in a dream in which the analysand had stolen some records from a music store, thinking them to be original discs. But they turned out not to be originals: they were *re-pressed*.

A pun in waking life is a clever exploration of ambiguity in the service of humor. When it occurs in a dream, one can assume that the manifest ambiguity has some connections to deeper meanings in the latent realm of the psyche as well, bringing to mind Empson's (1966) argument that the multiple ambiguities of a literary text are legion and probably can never be mined in toto. Psycho-

analysis is not a literary text, of course, but rather an ongoing experiential collaboration in which multiple meanings are dissected in the service of the mental health of the analysand. If a pun in a dream is riddled with ambiguities, as with the example just mentioned, both products (pun and dream) occurring in the context of an unfolding transference neurosis have even more subtleties and meanings and day's residues informing them than would be the case in a non-analytic context.

Since this analysand is an avid collector of rare records and therefore very interested in the music industry's constant production and reproduction of discs and records, the word *re-pressed* seemed to have little ambiguity for him at first. Records were re-pressed all the time. Nothing unusual about that. However, given that this word appeared in a dream in mid-analysis, where records of the past are constantly being scrutinized, and where the word *repressed*, if not used every day, is never far removed from the awareness of both parties to the psychoanalytic dialogue, this "new" word and its multiple ironies could not be denied. At first, the analysand, with a very characteristic dismissiveness, pooh-poohed the excessive Freudian interest in such masturbatory word games, but gradually the psychoanalytic play with the concept proved most fruitful. At least three meanings of the word *repress* began to become familiar shorthand concepts of a unique collaborative language, the sort of shared linguistic intimacies that are probably the hallmark of all intense analytic dialogues.

One meaning of the word in this analysis was the classic psychoanalytic meaning: to bar or rid something from consciousness. Another was the music industry's concept: to re-press a mold of an original recording, thereby making multiple copies of a piece of music. The third meaning was the most therapeutically fruitful, a meaning that developed over time: to *re-press* began to mean to *press* that aspect of conflict that had been initially repressed (in the psychoanalytic sense of the concept) into the new service of insightful reconsideration—that is, a thoughtful rehashing, rather than the dismissive unconscious action that makes conflict assessment impossible.

This rehashing or *pressing* of the formerly repressed into new service could not be called *working through*, which is surely a later phenomenon, but was more of a *working into*, so to speak, as the return of the repressed, facilitated by the free-associative process, was reconsidered and made use of in a new way. The formerly repressed psychic content was *worked into* the ongoing psychoanalytic process, in the way that an artist works one pigment into another to achieve the desired results. This seems a more descriptively active way to conceptualize the opportunity the ego has when the return of the repressed offers it a chance to rework conflict in a more adaptive way. The idea of a failure of repression, which is the traditional way of describing these dynamic events, seems too passive a depiction of this opportunity for redress of the neurotic or the habitual.

In this particular analysis, the third meaning of *re-press* described above seemed to quickly oust the second meaning, that of the music industry's concept, almost completely, so that from a clinical point of view, conflict seemed to represent the choice between *pressing something out of awareness* (the usual psychoanalytic sense of repress) or *pressing something into the new service of conscious insight*, where it could be played with until the most adaptive resolution of conflict could be achieved. This third meaning of *re-press* may have co-opted its terminology from the music industry's definition of the word, but it had altered the meaning significantly, if not totally. The new meaning, after all, did not imply a slavish reproduction of an original created by someone else, but an exploration of variations on one's own themes—the analyst's championing of his own artistry rather than recycling someone else's. In a sense, the collaborative analytic work had "invented" a sort of primal word with an antithetical meaning: to *repress* could mean any psychic avoidance of conflict, or to *re-press* could mean the constant attempt not to avoid any affect, no matter how painful, but instead to try to use all affect and conflict as signals, signposts that would allow the mind to continue its exploratory journeys rather than abandoning them.

Let me describe the psychoanalytic process in more detail so that the reader has more than abstraction with which to consider the clinical legs of the argument on which this presentation stands.

## CLINICAL SECTION

Isaiah was a 30-year-old Russian expatriate, an Oxford graduate who declined all invitations to join mainstream culture in any conventional manner. Having inherited great intelligence and wealth, he seemed to defiantly use the latter to minimize the former, or at least to make it seem so to family and peers. He did not seek to have his thesis published, since this might have propelled him toward an academic career that would have bored him. In fact, he left his newly adopted country behind when conventional success seemed certain, settling instead in New York, where he wrote music and poetry but seemed totally disinterested in having either published.

Isaiah had a devoted camaraderie of male friends, but his heterosexual relationships seemed to last no more than six months before getting disbanded—the unconscious agency completely unknown to him until psychoanalytic insights would subsequently make him aware of the hidden motivational system that pulled the strings to shape his behavior. An intense relationship with a woman had floundered when he was in his mid-twenties. She subsequently married and Isaiah continued to carry a torch, aware that he was licking old wounds rather than allowing any healing to occur. Subsequent short-lived relationships seemed to reflect bitterness about his lost love, with earlier genetic antecedents completely out of awareness until analysis jogged some memories that had long been dormant.

Isaiah sought analysis when he began to realize that life was passing him by: he found himself much too comfortable with intense marijuana intoxication, which tended to isolate him with his music and poetry, and even began to alienate him from his male peer group. Added to this was a grief following his father's death that began to feel more like a lingering depression than a normal



reaction to loss. And despite his great skepticism about all things intellectual, he seemed to be genuinely interested in analysis, particularly since his great, cynical brand of humor was welcomed as part of the analytic process; it was, after all, the characterological raw material that not only fueled resistance, but also revealed genetic pathways into the repressed core of the dynamic past.

The clinical hour in which Isaiah first used the word *repress* in an unusual way (at least to a psychoanalyst's ears) will now be reported in detail. It occurred in the third year of analysis. The analysis had allowed Isaiah to enter a long-term relationship with a woman without bolting after the customary six months. A new symptom had emerged, however: intimacy, which seemed genuine and intense, could not incorporate sexual pleasure after about one year into the relationship. The implied brother-sister connotation seemed odd to Isaiah, since, as an only child, he had no male or female sibling. Any incestuous implication relating to his mother seemed like a far-fetched psychoanalytic cliché, rather than any psychological concept that the patient could profitably associate to. He sensed that there must be genetic antecedents; he was just unable to fathom the depth psychology that may have spawned him but also eluded him. The genetic past had been recounted, but could not be seen as formative in any dynamic way, at least at this stage of the analytic process.

Isaiah's mother was a novelist who had married a man twenty years older than she: a respected journalist with an international reputation. The mother's cocaine addiction subsequently led to divorce. After a two-year period of joint custody of Isaiah, his parents reconciled, and while the divorce and reconciliation had been "civilized," there was a turmoil and an uncertainty that left serious emotional scars. The period between Isaiah's fourth and tenth years of age was volatile. His main defense seems to have been isolation in his own room, an adaptation that fostered passivity, denial, disavowal, and a sense of helpless fatalism.

The hour I will report first began with a dream, briefly mentioned earlier, which will now be examined in detail. Isaiah related the dream as follows:

I am in a record store in London. I am trying to curb my manic habit of buying everything in sight. However, I see some discs that I cannot resist, and I put them under my coat surreptitiously. They are original vinyl from the '50s, and I am excited about my find, even though I am guilty about the method of acquiring it. When I get home to my apartment, my friends point out that these are not the original discs I took them to be. They are *re-pressed* records, rather than the real thing.

Associations to the dream suggested that Isaiah felt very guilty regardless of how he tried to represent his wishes, whether as foiled or satisfied. There was a kind of despair in the notion that the original record of emotional discourse with mother or father could never be retrieved, no matter how crucial the lost information. The best we could come up with were re-pressed records of lost originals.

This sense of fatalism was an entrenched character trait that had multiple genetic determinants. One meaning was Isaiah's identification with a father who had remarried at a late age, his death leading to early abandonment of the analysand. Isaiah's anger was muted by this defensive identification, which embraced the fatalistic, rather than permitting him to rail against the father's shortsightedness. Another meaning was an identification with the mother, who had curbed her appetites, eventually, and conquered her addiction; Isaiah, too, had curbed his marijuana use and his manic "consumption" of records, but his sense of "what's the use; the originals are irretrievable; these are only re-pressed, pale imitations of the past" dulled the joy of any achievement. Life, like the analysis itself, was a lost cause, a disheartening pursuit of repressed meanings, when all that could be realistically achieved were replicas—re-pressed, vinyl imitations of an irretrievably lost childhood.

Isaiah had always made fun of the analyst's interpretations, seeing them as "far-fetched" attempts to connect current reality with "clichés" from the past. He became aware over time that his "teasing" of the analyst was not without significance. As a child, he had not felt safe in criticizing either parent—for example, about the

mother's addiction or the father's advanced age—which made both authorities seem too austere and too vulnerable to be “used” adaptively in the Winnicottian sense of the word. Allowing some humor, sarcasm, teasing, and playfulness to emerge in the transference took courage, and eventually came to be appreciated as an achievement.

The double meaning of the word *repress*, at first sneered at by the patient as the kind of Freudian masturbatory wordplay that analysts get off on, came to be admired as an idea that had emerged in one of Isaiah's own dreams; it need not be demeaned so quickly. In fact, the obligatory demeaning of his own creativity, whether it be his university thesis or the insight he extracted from a dream, was a form of neurotic cliché that attempted to downplay and numb all spontaneity. Labeling interpretative or reconstructive analytic work as clichéd or far-fetched theorizing was a form of resistance that could eventually be identified as such.

As he began to realize that his own insight into the nature of repression need not be ridiculed, Isaiah became deeply interested in his dreams as uncanny records of the past, an amalgam of current realities and ancient memories that could ironically point the way into the future, even though they seemed to obscure the blueprints of the past. His wish to curb his appetite for acquiring records, a greed to possess all the records in the world, could be accomplished in daylight, perhaps, but sleep had its own rules. In the dream described, he “appropriated” the “original” record that he had coveted but tried not to buy, although ironically, on arriving home with his stolen goods, he discovered they were not originals at all, but merely discs that had been *re-pressed*. His associations made it clear that his feelings for the analyst were replicas of his feelings for his parents. Were the feelings generated in analysis real, or were they only cheap, re-pressed records of forgotten memories?

This questioning of the genuine nature of his feelings for the analyst was a transference of the patient's mistrust of his primary caretakers and an abiding sense of his own passivity. His childhood solution to psychological conflict had been to retire to his

room and to attempt to disavow and deny all that he felt. The adult version of this habit led to loneliness, isolation, marijuana, pornography, and eventually the total decline of sexuality in his relationship with his girlfriend. Analytic insights gradually helped him understand the transference and its origins in the genetic records that shaped his childhood. His mistrust of analyst and girlfriend led to the insight that he shut out both of us in order to make us feel what he had felt as a child when his mother seemed to abandon him in a cocaine-induced, altered state of consciousness. He was aware that he was treating his girlfriend like a sister, and the incestuous implication of his depriving her and himself of sex was very disturbing to him. That recognition should remain *repressed* in the old sense of the word—and the original destroyed, never to be repressed into some current version of itself.

A second dream represented these ideas graphically and strikingly:

I am in Paris, close to the Eiffel Tower. I am with an old girlfriend who has a fictitious name, Mimi Seulement. She is so petite as to seem doll-like. By contrast, I have an enormous dick and I feel triumphant as I ignore her.

This dream was analyzed from many vantage points. The relevant associations referred to the name *Mimi*, which he believed to be a reference to *me-me*, the two aspects of his own self on which we had been focusing. From a genetic point of view, he believed that the dream recaptured the ancient conflict between child and mother. He was angry with mother for turning away from him, finding cocaine more attractive than her child. But he had been unable to articulate any of his feelings toward her, since he did not trust her as witness or custodian of his challenging affects—nor did he feel safe turning toward father for explanations and redress of the traumatic ambience that much of his childhood was imbued with. He realized that, by depriving his current girlfriend of sexual pleasure, he was playing both parts of the sadomasochistic enactment: one *me* who cruelly withheld love, and the other *me*, portrayed in the dream as Mimi, the perplexed victim of this deprivation.

Isaiah told of a third dream:

I am riding on an elephant, and a long-necked, monstrous creature appears. Suddenly, my mother, in the guise of some Hollywood monstrous diva, appears out of nowhere and hacks off the neck of the creature. The whole thing is terrifying, one monster attacking another.

Isaiah was amazed that he had depicted the rescuing mother in the dream as no less monstrous than the long-necked creature that threatened him. In genetic memory and its replay in transference, the invocation of parental or psychoanalytic goodwill could turn monstrous with an alacrity that not only alarmed Isaiah, but also alerted him to the repressed lairs of his unconscious underworld, where confounding convictions were spawned and then went into hiding.

The analytic process seemed to have become more and more of a laboratory where unconscious danger could be studied. In leaving the office after the session in which the long-necked monster was described, Isaiah lingered to look at the miniature sculptures on the analyst's desk. Pointing to a figurine with its mouth open, the patient joked, "Maybe you should cover it up. Better still, maybe you should put my records there, in stacks, instead of the sculptures." Could transference and analytic process be better characterized than by this wish to put all unconscious records on the drawing board, the originals and the repressed replicas, the unearthed results of intricate archeology of repressed original memories and *repressed*, recycled psychic derivatives that constituted the complexity of a human mind struggling with its conflicts?

I will present one further excerpt from the analytic process, which again highlights the concept of original records and how they can be repressed in both senses of the word. Isaiah reported a fourth dream:

I am driving on a highway. I come to a large warehouse, a cavelike building. I feel lonely inside at the sheer size of it. I see that there are stacks of records. I'm rummaging through them: lots of useless stuff, some good things. I

find a record by Gran' Piccolo [a jazz trumpeter]. Even in the dream, I seem amused by the condensation of "Big" and "Small" contained in his name. There are younger people around. They are record hunting, too. I feel competitive with them. I get the Gran' Piccolo record for Jill [his girlfriend].

The patient's first association is to suggest that he feels more generous with his girlfriend lately and that he is proud of this achievement. Giving her things is starting to please him more—"positive shit like that." Further associations to "shit" lead to the concept of shit as "an original record" of love (a gift to his parents) and hate (a hatred of being socialized, conventionalized). This is followed by a memory of a potty, a nursemaid, and a triumphant bowel movement. "A gift to the mother," Isaiah sneers, and we begin to understand the bringing of a gift to his girlfriend in the dream as a screen for bringing a gift to his mother. He starts to ridicule these genetic "clichés" and how the analyst has contaminated him "with all this Freudian bullshit." But he goes on to remember a dream about an old girlfriend "soiling her pants" and his secret pleasure in her embarrassment.

After a period of teasing the analyst about interpretations as clichés, a more sober mood takes over. Is the dream a return to early mother-child dialogue, as opposed to Isaiah's isolating himself in his room and cutting himself off from her? In the dream, is he returning to bring her a gift—a reversal of what he really seeks, a replay of the wish that she would now and in the past have always given him the gift of maternal stability and love, without the barrier of substance abuse between them? Isaiah begins to think of his nephew, a child of recently divorced parents. The patient's mother and brother are both against providing analysis for the nephew, but Isaiah plans to challenge them. He will stick up for his nephew, the way he wishes someone had done for him and provided him with analysis as a child.

His association to Gran' Piccolo, the trumpeter, was very significant. Earlier in the analysis, Isaiah had dreamed about two warring trumpeters and his wish to "bring them together." In the

same dream, a newborn child with placenta still attached was thrown carelessly at the bottom of his bed. Should he rush it to the hospital or forget about it? The condensation of giant and dwarf (portrayed by the name of the jazz trumpeter, Gran' Piccolo) in the latest dream seemed like a continuation of this theme. The patient was bringing a record by Gran' Piccolo (himself as a baby and as a grown-up) to his mother. He had *repressed* this record, dwarfed it for years. Now, as a giant (a grown-up man), he insisted that his dreams and his analysis in toto would repress that original record—of shit, of love, hate, and straight talk turned crooked—into a new active image of himself, a free-associating trumpeter who was not afraid of his own original records, nor of all their derivatives and replicas in the conflicted music of everyday life, that “dance to the music of time” that characterizes the fugal complexity of the human condition. “I repress, therefore I am,” Isaiah chortled, very much aware of the ambiguities that had once shackled him, but could now set him free.

## DISCUSSION

Marcel Proust (2003) would argue that while the past resides within the present, “all the efforts of our intelligence are futile” in evoking it: “The past lies hidden beyond the mind’s realm and reach, in some material object (in the sensation that material object gives us). And it depends entirely on chance whether or not we encounter that object before we die” (p. xiii). Freud (1933), less fatalistic than Proust, perhaps, argues that the repressed past is accompanied nonetheless by “a strong upward drive, an impulsion to break through into consciousness” (p. 68). Where Proust views chance and the sensations aroused by material objects as the royal road to recovery of the past, Freud exploits the “impulsion to break through into consciousness” that is made possible by free associations, transference, and their analysis. He does not rely on chance, therefore, but creates and cultivates the scientific situation and atmosphere to best “recapture” it.

Isaiah seems to have exploited the unique atmosphere of the psychoanalytic situation very profitably, and he did so by repress-

ing the past into new versions of itself that were anything but clichés or “broken records,” so to speak. As he “played” with his metaphors, he came to realize that recurring derivatives of the instinctual past can have adaptive and creative qualities in their own right. Initially, the re-pressings were experienced as disappointing, inferior copies of the original memories and experiences he aspired to recapture. The work of analysis, in some ways, was the close examination of the implications of his recurring metaphors—their intuitive savvy as well as their human limitations.

For instance, if one considers the metaphor of the recording industry and the multiple repressings of an original “master,” it becomes clear that the human mind is far more creative than is evidenced by slavish vinyl copies. Whereas constant repressings of the original master tend to “dull” the original, the return of the repressed gives the mind an opportunity not merely for instant replay, but also for creative modification. If transference and repetition compulsion have a neurotic, slavish, carbon-copy insistence on sameness about them, their interpretation within the psychoanalytic situation nevertheless represents one of the greatest agents for change that Freud ever discovered.

If the mind can *re-press* as well as *repress*, my patient’s dream in which this pun made its appearance could be seen to have the defensive strategy of seducing the censor—and even, perhaps, the analyst—into believing that a manifest declaration of innocence absolved the dreamer from the implication or examination of any of his latent wishes. (An “original” sin had not been committed, since only a copy had been stolen.) This would seem to be an example of self-deception: an insistence on the unique meaning of *re-press* as the mere copy of an original (the music industry’s definition). It has been suggested (Mahon 2002, 2005) that when a well-constructed joke or a parapraxis takes center stage in the manifest display of a dream, these extra, overt flourishes are designed to throw the censor off the scent of urgent instinctual expressions clamoring offstage for prime time, so to speak, in some latent theater of the mind. Isaiah’s dream pun suggests a similar intent, perhaps: to beguile the censor with manifest content, the better to deflect attention from the latent.



Isaiah's symptom of an inability to integrate sexuality and intimacy in an object relationship once the emotional stakes were raised (after a period of approximately six months) suggested that the repressed incestuous wish could not remain repressed after a certain amount of time had lapsed. In the past, Isaiah would bolt at that critical juncture, as if the repressed and the return of the repressed were together too much for him: there was nothing to do but terminate the object relationship and run. In his subsequent state of improving mental health, in which he tried to *re-press* in the adaptive, creative sense of the word, he did not bolt, but neither could he sustain his sexual interest. In the dream, this "problem" was solved by "protesting too much," so to speak: the manifest content seemed to declare that the theft was not of an "original," but of a mere replica!

This brings to mind the irony Euripides exploited in his play *Helen*, in which only an effigy of Helen was carried off to Troy, not the real woman, thereby making that particular war (and all wars, by extension) more tragic and ironic than ever. In Isaiah's case, the latent incestuous wish was denied: he copped a lesser plea by admitting only that he had made off with a replica. However, Isaiah's insistence that he merely re-pressed the original—nothing more than that—exposed the fact, as the analysis proceeded, that the unconscious wish for total incestuous possession of the wayward mother and triumph over the father was not about to relinquish its unconscious oedipal monopoly. That is, there was a stubborn refusal to settle for the re-pressing of the old and primitive into the new developmental adaptations that reality testing called for. Only the original repressed could satisfy this incestuous hunger; the return of the repressed merely rubbed salt into the narcissistic wounds of this "jilted" lover.

At this juncture, one could argue that the three meanings of *repress* described earlier were jockeying for power as the conflict revealed more of its facets in the analytic situation. The classic psychoanalytic meaning of *repress* (to shun from consciousness) would seem to have had the most power as the incestuous wish to make off and make out with the "original" object of desire was rejected,

on the one hand, from a conscious point of view, but secretly enjoyed from an unconscious point of view. The music industry's definition of *re-press* offered an appealing, self-deceptive, defensive strategy: "I never touched the original. It was a mere replica. I am not guilty." But a third meaning of *repress* began to find a foothold, as clinical process pressed forward, however haltingly, allowing a regressive pathway—ironically—to eventually pave the way toward its progressive goals.

Isaiah began to sense that if his clever pun could be exploited by the dream work for neurotic purposes while he was asleep, he could also put this playful, creative potential to work when he was awake! In that spirit, he playfully suggested that the analyst could replace the figurines on his desk with stacks of Isaiah's own records—an obvious assertion of his sense of possession of the analytic space, his personal records being more important than inert archeological replicas of the past. Here he seemed willing to "press" his own case, to pit his self-esteem against the inert artifacts of the past, bringing to mind Freud's (1937) discussion of repressed memories and artifacts: Freud maintained that, while the repressed is alive and capable of alteration, the archeological artifact remains inert, and in fact eventually deteriorates.

Isaiah did not flee from the intimacy of the newfound, long-lasting object relationship with his girlfriend, even if he was initially unable to wed intimacy and sexuality as maturely as he hoped to eventually be able to do. In other words, he seemed to insist on this third meaning of *repress/re-press*, even if the other two meanings still had a seductive hold on him much of the time, as his dreams and puns suggested.

It could be argued that the thesis of this entire paper rests upon the rather shaky foundation of puns and wordplay. But if one acknowledges that the essence of all conflict has to do with original records and how they were repressed in an early context, and pressed back into service in a later context (re-pressed in the new sense), the complexity of these dynamics of obfuscation and disclosure are further layered when one considers the etymology of the word *record*. Partridge (1959) reminds us that this word comes

to us by way of the “OF-MF” (old French-medieval French) *record*, which meant *memory*. It was derived from the “OF-EF” (old French-early modern French) *recorder*: to *remember for oneself*, to *recall to another*. The earlier Latin *recordari* (*re* = back, *cor* = heart or mind, *dari* = an infinitive form, i.e., to *bring back to mind*) reminds us that heart and mind, affect and intellect, are integral to memory and all records of it.

Ambiguity has been our topic here. The repression or preservation of records has been our topic as well. If infantile amnesia is arguably the most dramatic example of the depth and breadth of repression—an iron curtain that separates prelatency memory from latency, adolescence, and adulthood—there are nevertheless a handful of screen memories that seem to elude the extraordinary repressive forces of obliteration. Freud (1899) commented on two psychical forces that bring about memories of this sort. One force tries to obliterate, while the other tries to undo the obliteration. The clash of the two forces leads, by way of displacement, to the recording of a mnemonic image, which is not the original image, but some associated “sham” that vicariously represents the original.

Thus, already by 1899, Freud had pointed out a remarkable irony about the archiving work of the mind. The ultraclear quality of a screen memory, which seems to lend it authenticity, may in fact represent a reflection of displaced energy, rather than an emanation from the original source: what seems like the original, bona fide record may in fact be a fake, and what memory recognizes as the original may be a *re-pressed* version of only one piece of a shattered jigsaw puzzle—most of the pieces of which have been *re-pressed*.

In 1914, Freud again commented on the intriguing ambiguity of memory’s flight from the recording of itself. In comparing screen memories to the manifest content of a dream, he argued that, like latent dream thoughts, all the missing, archival pieces that childhood amnesia attempts to obliterate could be retrieved from screen memories. “It is simply a question of knowing how to extract it out of them by analysis” (p. 148).

## SUMMARY

I have argued that Isaiah learned how to extract meaning from unlikely sources, how to mine the ambiguities of old records and their derivatives in dreams and puns and all aspects of character, symptom, and behavior. I have emphasized how the mining of multiple meanings of a pun in a dream led to a kind of dialectical discussion of an antithetical way of thinking about repression (at least in one psychoanalytic context). This emphasis on one word, one defensive concept, and its ambiguities is not meant to demean or diminish the overdetermined complexities of the rest of this particular analysis—or all analyses in general, for that matter—but merely to suggest that each clinical moment is part of a multi-textured fabric, each thread an integral part of a whole. If one thread can unravel the whole cloth, it can also instruct us—provided it is pursued with care and respect for the loom, for the fabric maker, and for the way in which the complex stitchery of the whole enterprise and all its intriguing ambiguities were constructed.

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## ON THE PSYCHOANALYTIC TREATMENT OF A PSYCHOTIC BREAKDOWN

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*The author discusses the four-session-a-week psychoanalysis of a patient in psychotic breakdown with outbursts of violence. The analyst's first appearance in the transference was as a "rattle" (the noise made by his shifting in his chair), which constituted undeniable evidence of corporality—first the analyst's and then the patient's—leading eventually to the awareness of there being two separate persons in the psychoanalytic relationship. This case highlights the analyst's need to function in a particular way, and to allow him- or herself to be used in a particular way, in working with very disturbed patients, where issues of the body-mind relationship and of separation from the other are often central to the analytic work.*

### INTRODUCTION

In this paper, I shall present clinical material from the psychoanalysis of a borderline patient who started therapy in a state of incipient psychosis. I will discuss the different stages of the analytic process and the various levels of the analytic relationship, as well as the roles of intra- and intersubjective elements in psychoanalytic

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Translation by Karen Christenfeld.

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technique, in keeping with the mental space and ego resources available to a difficult patient. This article was conceived primarily as a clinical account, so I shall limit the theoretical introduction to the essential minimum, focusing on two main points that constitute a theoretical framework for the clinical phenomena: communication in undifferentiated states, and the contribution of the body to mental growth and differentiation.

The analyst who enters into a psychoanalytic relationship with a psychotic analysand is faced by a confused state in which the borders of the self and the sense of identity are in jeopardy. I shall connect this clinical condition to the deeper levels of the unconscious, with the help of Matte Blanco's (1975, 1988) contributions on the subject. I shall then discuss how the analysand, through the mediation of the analyst, can draw progressively closer to his or her own bodily sensations, finding in the perception of the body a decisive element of differentiation and a first principle of reality, which can stimulate awareness of both the self and others; here I shall refer briefly to some of Ferrari's (1982, 2004) theories. Although these two theorists' styles differ, their writings are in some ways complementary, and I find that the recent contributions of both Matte Blanco and Ferrari significantly facilitate the approach to and the understanding of extremely difficult clinical situations.

## COMMUNICATION IN UNDIFFERENTIATED STATES

In psychosis, the subject is missing; it has been supplanted by violence, motor discharge, and the inability to differentiate, characteristics that are typical of the id's chaotic instinctual impulses (Freud 1923), and typical also of the paranoid-schizoid position (Klein 1946). Moreover, the mind is dominated by concrete thinking and is incapable of differentiating the human from the nonhuman world (Searles 1965; Tausk 1933). Resnik (2001) noted that in psychotic breakdown, the body image disintegrates, and the human being loses status as an individual and as a person. At the same time, however, we know that if arrogance and feelings of

omnipotence are not extreme (Bion 1957b), the patient can prove receptive to a relationship of acceptance and containment on the part of the analyst, thanks to an inner *preconception*, waiting to be developed, of encountering an object capable of reverie (Bion 1962). This preconception, however, is not to be confused with a fully human *conception* of oneself and others.

The loss of a self-image, characteristic of psychosis, is reminiscent of a very early condition, when the subject has not yet differentiated him- or herself from external surroundings, most particularly from the mother. As Freud (1930) observed, "An infant at the breast does not as yet distinguish his ego from the external world" (p. 67). In the course of development, communication with the mother (or with the analyst), mediated by projective identification (Klein 1946), allows the subject increasingly to develop his or her own capability for containment. The normal aspects of projective identification, which Klein highlighted, represent the earliest form of empathy (Segal quoted by Bon de Matte 1988, p. 326) and form the basis for Bion's concept of reverie (1962).

Matte Blanco (1988) connects the relational experience of early mother-child interaction with the deepest aspects of being, in which concreteness and nondifferentiation are dominant, as Freud (1915b) indicated. Matte Blanco interprets projective identification as a *bi-logical* structure correlated with the function of the "indivisible mode of being" (1988, pp. 77-ff). He reduces the characteristics of the unconscious (condensation, displacement, timelessness, exemption from mutual contradiction, and so on) described by Freud (1900, 1915b) to two basic principles: the *asymmetrical* or divisible mode of being, which reflects rational logic as set forth by Aristotle, and the *symmetrical* or indivisible mode, which functions in the opposite manner, doing away with the distinction between subject and object.

The intertwining of rational logic and symmetrical logic constitutes a *bi-logical structure*, functioning as a kind of "Paleolithic logic" (Arieti 1955, pp. 229-ff) or anti-logic (see Von Domarus 1944). Thus, the unconscious is perceived essentially as a *structure* characterized by the failure of the spatio-temporal organization that is gen-

erally a part of our thinking. The concept of this *unrepressed unconscious* was intuited by Freud (cf. Matte Blanco 1975, pp. 72-79), but it was overshadowed by the much more famous concept of the *repressed unconscious*.

This kind of unconscious functioning is particularly noticeable in the context of emotion—which was already in the Freudian view considered to be an expression of the so-called seething cauldron of the id—where the organized order of thought is infiltrated by symmetrical logic. “In its more preponderantly symmetrical aspects, emotion coincides with the system unconscious” (Matte Blanco 1975, p. 305). Such a position is not inconsistent with a clinical approach to undifferentiated mental states, particularly since Matte Blanco considers emotion to be the mother of thinking (p. 303).

Projective identification, seen from this perspective, is a mechanism in which symmetry has the upper hand (Matte Blanco 1988, pp. 146-154). This means a loss of the distinction between the person of the patient and that of the analyst, on the deepest levels. Matte Blanco’s description of projective identification thus makes a theoretical connection between the *relational* aspect of Klein’s description and Freud’s basically *uni-personal* concept of the unconscious. Hence, the absence of distinction between self and other—an absence derived from the functioning of the unconscious—affects not only internal functioning, but also the relationship between subjects, to the point that they are *felt* as identical (representing a dominance of symmetry), even though they can be *recognized*, from the viewpoint of reality, as distinct (a dominance of asymmetry). The further one goes in exploring the fathomless depths characteristic of mental functioning in psychotic states, the more the proportion of symmetry approaches a potentially total absence of distinction.

Here I am making use of Matte Blanco’s notion of an unconscious that is structurally organized on different *levels* or *strata*, according to the varying proportion of asymmetrical or symmetrical phenomena present. In his view of the mind as a *constitutive stratified bi-logical structure*, Matte Blanco distinguishes the first level as that of delimited and quite asymmetrical thinking or percep-



tion. The second stratum is characterized by the presence of emotions, and here distinctions begin to become hazy: "For instance, one may feel, 'this person is like a tiger'; but a normal person will not feel he is a tiger" (Matte Blanco 1988, p. 53). On the third level, the individual is identified with the class to which he or she belongs (e.g., a teacher or an office manager could be experienced as an unqualified representative of the father class, or even God the father), so that distinctions progressively fade and emotions are often all-engrossing. On this level, emotional intensity tends to have an *infinite value*, as is the case with small children's emotions, which Klein (1932) studied extensively.

The fourth level and successively deeper levels are increasingly characterized by the absence of distinction, or, in mathematical terms, by indivisibility: "The more the symmetry, the deeper will the level be" (Matte Blanco 1988, p. 170). The description of some clinical phenomena that involve the convergence and blending of the analysand's experience with that of the analyst, as in Ogden's (1994) theory of the analytic third, would refer, according to this perspective, to deep levels, to which manifestations of so-called concrete thinking are attributed (Segal 1957).

Matte Blanco's hypothesis seems to me a reasonable representation of how the internal state of a patient can *influence* the *continuous* experience the analyst has of him- or herself as far down as the deepest levels. Matte Blanco (1975) writes:

It might be said that symmetrical relations reveal *obscure aspects of being*, those where the individual merges into the others (through disappearance of contiguity relations or space) and into the infinite (through disappearance of both space and time or relations of succession). [p. 265, italics added]

The symmetrical involvement of the analyst in the context of the psychoanalysis of psychosis would then affect not only the conscious-preconscious levels, which are generally involved in the so-called common countertransference reactions to be found within the temporal confines of a session, but also the deep unconscious

of the analyst—and, it should be noted, would affect the body as well, since the body is intimately connected to the unconscious. According to this theory, the relationship with the profound unconscious has the quality of a sort of “Stranger within thee—and me” (Grotstein 2000, p. 113) or of “the other who is unknown to oneself” (Lombardi 2003a, p. 860). Hence, something remains that is reminiscent of the mysterious world of the subject’s bodily sensations.

### PERCEPTION OF THE BODY AS THE SOURCE OF DIFFERENTIATION AND MENTAL GROWTH

Just after noting the suckling infant’s difficulty in differentiating himself from the external world, Freud (1930) continues, “He must be *very strongly impressed by the fact that some sources of excitation, which he will later recognize as his own bodily organs, can provide him with sensations at any moment*” (p. 67, italics added). Thus, Freud emphasizes the role of the body in developing the ability to differentiate, in mental growth and in the organization of the ego.

Various authors have highlighted the way that physical sensations, the functioning of the body, and the body image make decisive contributions to the sense of identity (Freud 1914; Gaddini 1980; Mahler & McDevitt 1982; Marty 1976, 1980; McDougall 1989; Peto 1959; Schilder 1956; Scott 1948; Winnicott 1953). Some studies have explored the interaction between bodily sensations, the sense of reality (Frosch 1966; Lichtenberg 1978), and the formation of the self (Meissner 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c), without neglecting to emphasize the importance of the sense of unity derived from the internal material reality provided by the body.

Recently, Ferrari (2004; cf. Lombardi 2002), in a further development of Klein’s and Bion’s theories, has emphasized the contribution of the body, which he calls the Concrete Original Object (COO), to the genesis of the functions of thought. The primary experience that the subject has of his or her body gradually develops mental components, thanks to its encounter with an object capable

of reverie (Bion 1962), which encourages an eclipse of corporality. The astronomical model of the "eclipse of the body" casts the body as a sort of incandescent planet, which is gradually eclipsed as mental functions are developed, largely through perceptual activation of sense organs.<sup>1</sup>

In the analytic relationship, Ferrari perceives a *vertical relationship* that pertains to the internal body-mind axis, as well as a *horizontal relationship* that pertains to the external analysand-analyst axis. These relationships exist contemporaneously, and the analyst intervenes in one or the other of the two relationships, according to the specific receptiveness the analysand has shown. Generally, interpretations based on the vertical relationship are particularly useful in approaching the so-called narcissistic patient and encouraging the working through of moments of inability to recognize otherness.

Thus, the analyst endowed with reverie plays a decisively facilitating role, continuing all the while to remain essentially *external* to the patient's subjectivity, which is circumscribed by its characteristic corporality. During the analytic process, even as the analysand *moves closer to the self*, in the sense of approaching for the first time the "thinkableness" of disorganized areas, the analyst *returns toward him- or herself*, in the sense that the analyst is reconfronting sensory-emotional intensity and disorganization, which he or she has already confronted in other circumstances—all the while discovering new implications of his or her internal experience (Ferrari 1982).

In working psychoanalytically with psychosis, I have constantly been reminded of the fact that the analyst, in these situations, again comes up against the disorganized states typical of the basic levels of functioning of his or her own Concrete Original Object—i.e., the levels corresponding to the profound unconscious, which, as Matte Blanco describes it, is pervaded by symmetry. These psychosensory phenomena are still alive and active, since one continues

<sup>1</sup> This model is in contradistinction to Klein's position (1952) that the introjection of the good breast exists at the root of the organization of the ego.

to experience bodily sensations and emotions. Contact with the psychotic condition, however, stimulates internal experiences in the analyst that are particularly laden with concreteness and intensity, so that achieving *an eclipse of sensory and emotional phenomena* (especially disintegration and hatred), and the consequent formation of a mental space, are particularly tricky and uncertain. Thus, the analytic process in these clinical situations is deeply rooted in *asymbolic and unrepresentable areas*. At the same time, the analyst has to be ready to make the most of any sudden and *unpredictable openness toward symbolization* that may emerge in the analysand; such developments greatly advance the analytic process, as they gradually free the patient from psychotic phenomena.<sup>2</sup>

The analyst's familiarity with unconscious levels has presumably been honed in the course of his or her own analysis through the toleration of ineffable experiences (Bion 1965). The fact that this internal experience comes sharply to the fore again during the treatment of psychotic patients calls for a *particular awareness and responsibility on the part of the analyst*, in regard to *the sensory burden of proto-emotions to which the analyst is susceptible*, a burden that is for the most part unconscious, and that, in the absence of adequate containment, can expose him or her to various forms of dangerous disorganization. A similar awareness and responsibility should likewise be stimulated in the analysand, even in the context of the most serious disturbances of thinking; in saying this, therefore, from a technical point of view, I am placing myself in opposition to the encouragement of regression, in line with the views of other authors such as Bion (1955), Jackson (2001), and Renik (1998).

Hence, the analyst lends his or her mind to the analysand, adopting the mental metabolism of those phenomena on which

<sup>2</sup> It would not be out of place, from this perspective, to reconsider the current, slightly disparaging attitude toward the so-called primitiveness of those mental states that are organized around bodily sensations—in contradistinction to the sterling worth of abstract thought. We should not overlook the fact that it is precisely the psychosensory area that gives rise to such meaningful, subtle, and complex mental manifestations as poetry and various other forms of artistic expression.

the patient is not yet in a position to act, and encouraging the progression of the analysand's *language register* (Ferrari 2004) toward more integrated (i.e., representative and symbolic) forms, while also stimulating self-awareness about the particular forms of internal functioning of which the latter has made use (see, for example, Lombardi 2003a, 2003b). In this context, it can happen that the analyst dreams something that the analysand is not yet capable of dreaming; this phenomenon, however, would not be the expression of an *expulsive* process comparable to acting out (Grinberg 1987), but would instead be the expression of a working-through *reverie* that is synchronized with the patient's needs.

In other words, the analyst can, by means of his or her dream, work through very basic aspects of his or her own profound emotional life—facilitating, in parallel, a similar process in the analysand. This *intersubjective resonance* (Grotstein 2000) spurs each member of the analytic couple toward constructive working through *throughout* each participant's subjectivity. The mental organization provided by the dream—or, more generally, by the so-called *dream-work alpha* (Bion 1992)—is crucial in terms of structuring mental phenomena, in keeping with what Bion (1962) pointed out when he said that “the ability to dream preserves the personality from what is virtually a psychotic state” (1962, p. 16).

In short—regardless of how inexact any account of the process of clinical work must be—before the construction of the subject can take place, the patient needs to construct a relationship with his or her body that defines a border for the self, so that it becomes possible to differentiate the self from the external world and to build relational parameters, both with oneself and with others.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, particular attention should be given to the *intra-subjective meaning of certain intersubjective events*, which, in the initial phases of the analytic process, may be of value *mainly* because they represent advances in the patient's identity formation. On the

<sup>3</sup> “[A] scientific deductive system and its abstraction, or the model and its associated images, can only be an approximation to the realization and vice versa” (Bion 1962, p. 64).

other hand, after the analysand has set up a relationship with his or her body and achieved an initial sense of internal cohesion, the ability to face the otherness of the analyst makes a significant contribution to the progress of the analytic process by means of the working through of dual and triadic relational dimensions.

In the first part of the clinical material that follows, I shall attempt to show how issues centered on the body opened the door to the beginnings of boundary formation in my patient. In the second part, I shall describe how the patient slowly learned to discriminate between the two people in the analytic relationship.

## CLINICAL MATERIAL

I first met Lorenzo for consultation connected with his desire to learn a "technique" that would enable him to change the behavior of his relatives. Because of this and other evidence of a paranoid state, I tried to motivate him to start analysis, but without success. When he reappeared a couple of years later, the situation had worsened, and Lorenzo asked if he could begin analysis because he realized that he was starting to lose control of his aggression. In fact, on one occasion, he had nearly killed his three-year-old son. Lorenzo could not explain these abrupt outbursts of violence, which came and went like tornadoes, for no obvious reason. On top of these problems, he occasionally took drugs (cocaine and others), and his sexual habits were of the type that is generally considered perverse.

Lorenzo, then in his early forties, was short and thick-set. He spoke coolly and lucidly, but at times his speech became confused and incomprehensible. He was markedly unemotional, and would have seemed to be made of ice, were he not occasionally breathless with agitation. Starting with the first session, I noticed that Lorenzo had an obvious thought disorder. His thinking was so concrete that he was quite unable to grasp the meaning of any metaphor. At that point, I thought that his problem was not only that he might kill his son, but also that he had already killed his mind.

I agreed to see him four times a week. He was to be seen simultaneously by another psychiatrist who would prescribe psychotro-

pic drugs, but he soon became suspicious and stopped taking his antipsychotic medication.<sup>4</sup>

Initially, my aim during our sessions was to strengthen the nonpsychotic part of Lorenzo's personality (Bion 1957a). A particularly important aspect of this stage of his analysis was some work that enabled him not to kill his sick dog, but instead to bear the dog's imminent death without interfering with the course of the illness. I facilitated this development by focusing on the inescapable reality of death as an objective fact that had to be acknowledged (Lombardi 1986), and before which his anguish and sense of impotence had led him to want to kill as a way of controlling those feelings and omnipotently getting rid of them. Positive results of this work were, of course, slow to become evident; it took several years before the patient was able to abandon the idea that he was inanimate and immortal, and could say to me: "The idea of an unchanging eternity is beginning to really frighten me. I'm starting to feel that I can accept the idea of not being immortal."

After the first months of analysis, his outbursts of aggression began to decrease, but I was still worried; there was, in fact, another very disturbing incident. While the patient was driving in heavy traffic and had come to a stop, a man in a nearby car, also stuck, turned toward Lorenzo to say something to him. Quite impassively, Lorenzo got out of his car and calmly opened the trunk. He took out the jack and proceeded to go after the man, with the intention of smashing his skull. Privately, I linked this disturbing incident to my impression that, at times, he experienced my words as if they were incomprehensible concrete objects that, instead of helping him (a jack for an emergency) made him feel threatened.

### *Dreaming as a Way of Emerging from Psychosis*

After this analysis began, I often had feelings of irritation and hatred, which manifested themselves in very violent dreams, fea-

<sup>4</sup> In the course of an analysis, I consider it advisable to keep psychoanalytic interventions and pharmacological interventions distinct from one another. I find that this helps the analyst avoid being attributed with omnipotent aspects, as well as facilitating the patient's ability to distinguish between body and mind as differentiated orbits that present different needs.

turing scenes of butchery and bleeding carcasses. Only later did I realize that these feelings were related to my drawing near intense and very concrete feelings of hatred which, although usually unconscious, were at that point particularly aroused by my sharing Lorenzo's experience. In fact, when the patient was feeling generally better and more integrated, he expressly stated his desire to butcher his father and brother and to eat their flesh. I think that what I experienced during this period was crucial to catalyzing the patient's ability to dream, a way of emerging from psychosis (Bion 1962).

In a dream from the early, acute phase of his psychosis, the patient saw *a flooded landscape, with water inundating everything and everyone*. This flooding portrayed for the first time his emotionally catastrophic condition, just when it was being shared by both participants in the analytic relationship. The analyst was not represented in the dream because the patient was not yet able to perceive him as separate. I felt, however, that my relationship with him played an important role in facilitating his burgeoning ability to symbolize. In the dream, he tried desperately to resist *the current that was threatening to sweep him away, by hitching himself to his house with anything he could find, such as knotted sheets, etc.* He recounted this dream without any associations, nor was it possible to foster any form of conscious working through. I nevertheless considered this dream an important milestone on the way to Lorenzo's awareness of his then-dramatic situation. The flooded landscape reminded me of the danger of his being swept away from any connection with himself, and I fancied that his house might represent his body, whose drives he was constantly in danger of losing both contact with and control of.

In other dreams, Lorenzo was often *on the open sea, in a boat or other vessel*. Our work together continued, and the severity of his psychotic symptoms gradually lessened. In his dreams, some structured elements (for instance, a stone arch in the middle of the sea) started to appear, until finally he passed from marine and aquatic settings to dreams in which, for the first time, land appeared. The



symbolism was suggestive, at an almost mythical level, of a way out of a personal deluge.<sup>5</sup>

In another dream, Lorenzo was *on a beach with the sea before him. He was walking toward his car, which was near the water.* He told me that later that same night, he experienced an “inexplicable terror” related to a subsequent dream in which *he saw his son, when he was a few months old, as an alien: his features were deformed and he looked like a “suckling pig.”*

Here, the way out of psychosis was also suggested by the patient’s finding a body/car. This element was associated with encountering an alien who looked like an animal, a suckling pig. The dream with the pig marked the first steps in Lorenzo’s evolution toward something alive with needs—i.e., milk—which were still very *alien* to his nonhuman parameters. Thus, the representation of the suckling pig perhaps implied the beginning of a link with an emotional and symbolic “milk of human kindness,” to use a Shakespearean expression, which the patient was experiencing in the context of the analytic relationship.

In this dream, the development of the analysand seemed to be traced by a progressive rapprochement between him and his body, to the point that he could make a connection with it, which helped to allay the undifferentiated violence of psychosis. I had then not yet realized how far this patient was from perceiving himself as a human being. When I suggested to Lorenzo, some time later in the analysis, that he was evolving into something that felt more human, he substituted the word *living* for *human* in echoing this back to me. I believe that the living dimension is closely related to the corporal one, given that the biological dimension of the body is what initially characterizes life.

This link with the corporal had apparently already been expressed in the patient’s first dream, the one about the flooded house. I shall now proceed to illustrate the further development of this theme.

<sup>5</sup> Relevant to recall here are the C elements in Bion’s (1965) grid, which indicate the level of representation in the context of progression from the concrete to the abstract.

*Evidence of the Body in the Analytic Relationship*

After some months of analysis, Lorenzo became highly impatient with everything related to my physical presence. The first time this happened, I was unprepared for his reaction and frightened by it. I had shifted slightly in my chair, and its leather covering had made a noise. With mounting irritation, Lorenzo said that there was a noise in the room that he did not understand. I reacted anxiously, as if I had done something rude and threatening. I had the sensation of diminishing in size, as if I wanted to disappear altogether. Probably the fear of being confronted with his violence made me withdraw: it was as if I, like the driver caught in traffic near the patient, was in danger of attack. This episode came to mind again, and made me suspect that I might have developed such a fear of the patient's hatred that I felt at last that the only solution for me was to disappear.

This situation occurred again. In a subsequent session, a movement of mine was followed by a noise from my armchair. Quietly, but with icy menace, Lorenzo said that this was a disturbing noise, something like the sound of a baby's rattle; and then he became silent, as if waiting for something to happen. I told him that it was my body that, by moving the cushions of the armchair, had made the noise, and that therefore *I* was the rattle. Lorenzo answered that the noise had annoyed him. I replied—making an effort to sound as natural as possible—that he obviously thought the noise should not exist, and that what produced it should not exist, either: the fact, in other words, of having a body. I added that all he gained by denying his body was the loss of an important “clinging” point—as seemed to be the case in his dream, in which clinging to his house (arguably, his body) helped him not to become overwhelmed by his emotions.

Lorenzo accepted my suggestion with an unusual silence. I sensed an unwonted inner tranquility in him; indeed, I imagined that his silence might be an indication of his newfound ability to use my interventions, and, at the same time, to get in touch with his own body and physical sensations.

In a subsequent session, something else unexpected emerged. While we were talking, the patient's cell phone beeped. He stood up, noted where the sound was coming from, and turned off his phone. Once back on the couch, he told me that he had discovered something he had never thought of before—that the body also sends out “beeps” that communicate something to us. I was surprised by Lorenzo's insight and by his ability to associate the experience of the beep, by means of which somebody else could find him, with *the messages coming from the sensations of his body, which could help him to find himself*.

The patient's discovery of the “beep,” representing a sensorial perception of real bodily data, appeared to be an evolutionary aspect of his discovery of a “rattle” in reference to the bodily noises emanating from the analyst. The sonorous dimension of the signal (rather than a symbol itself, in the narrow sense) that characterizes these resonances helps us better comprehend the peculiar, pre-symbolic nature of this phase of elaboration. Analogously, in horseback riding, certain conventional vocal signals, associated with specific physical requests, permit communication with the horse: for example, a sort of clucking noise stimulates a trot, or the spoken word “whoa,” a stop. In fact, a little later in Lorenzo's treatment, during a summer interruption, he took up horseback riding: an experience that, in regard to the necessary communication with an animal, seemed to reinforce his orientation toward keeping his mind in communication with his body, or rather toward his personal ethological dimension. The elaboration of these particular levels, then, seems to play a relevant role in the genesis of containment of the motoric charge that forms an essential component of thought (Freud 1911).

### *The Patient's Transference to His Own Body*

After a weekend break, Lorenzo returned to the same subject:

On Sunday, after working all through the weekend, I felt confused again. I drank a glass of beer and immediately felt really confused . . . Then I remembered the beep, and

I put the phone next to my ear. In this way, I realized how tired I was, and I connected this with the beer . . . . The confusion disappeared.

I welcomed Lorenzo's ability to make use of his insights and to carry on the working-through process while still in a general condition that showed signs of imminent mental catastrophe. I told him that he could use his discovery of the beep to remain in communication with himself and his physical sensations, and to be aware of which elements might affect his mind, as had happened in this case with overwork and the ingestion of a particular substance. Lorenzo seemed to pay close attention to what I was saying; the stirring of his curiosity in these instances was apparently a very positive sign.

I suppose that the patient's communication about the beep could have been interpreted quite differently: for example, as an expression of his pathological narcissism, which made him react, when faced with his own disorganization, by summoning up an omnipotent mechanical object, or else as a hallucinatory way of reestablishing magical contact with the person of the analyst. My interpretation to him, by contrast, brought out the component of insight contained in this communication, and emphasized the ability to relate to himself that Lorenzo was starting to mobilize. Thus, what was reinforced was not his dependence on the analyst, but rather the *responsibility* he was showing toward himself ("I realized how tired I was"), particularly in relation to normal needs and limitations of a bodily nature.

With this development, the patient showed that he was able to use the perceptions he had achieved during analysis by connecting the possibility of registering them mentally with the crude promptings of his body. He thus *located the state of his body "within" the totality of his experience*. Work, fatigue, lack of rest, and the chemical effects of the beer ceased to be meaningless, anonymous elements, and became *real* elements linked to his confusional state.

This event, which might otherwise seem insignificant, led to a series of subsequent experiences in which the consideration of his body became primary for the patient. Up to that time, he had

hardly slept during weekends, even at night, because he regarded sleep as a waste of time. He would often travel between cities at night, for instance, so as not to lose working hours during the day. He told me that, during one of his journeys on the expressway, he had a hallucination of a Roman aqueduct. He stopped and slept for a few hours. When he related this incident to me, he observed that if he had not stopped, he would have risked a serious accident: a further demonstration of his growing sense of reality. When I heard him say this, my relief was so great that I could hardly believe that Lorenzo had been able to stop, accepting the limitations that were his as a living creature subject to the constraints imposed by the alternation of night and day, and subject also to exhaustion.

By contrast, before his analysis, Lorenzo would react to his limitations with compulsive sexual discharge or by bullying his dependents. During another session, he said to me: "I used to be convinced that the mind could go on forever, without wearing out. But perhaps the mind is like the body: it has definite limits!" In this situation, as in others, my comments were designed to reinforce the analysand's emerging perception of the existence of limits in relation to his experience of himself.

Lorenzo's acknowledgment of his body and his discovery of its boundaries and their effect on his mind contributed substantially to reducing his psychotic symptoms. Indeed, for the moment, at least, his uncontrolled outbreaks of violence made no further appearance.

### *Sharing an Experience*

I shall now discuss how this case continued to develop, as exemplified by one particular session. As soon as Lorenzo came in, he asked me if he could keep his raincoat on. I felt that he was more alert than usual and more able to maintain emotional contact with me, so I imagined that his request contained something constructive, though as yet I had no way of knowing what it was. He lay down on the couch and started to tell me about a dream: "I was here with you, and we were standing and having a snack and

talking like friends. I was telling you about some work, and you said that if I hadn't worked well enough in analysis, you would have already sent me away."

I was very much struck by the patient's account. Indeed, I was astonished to discover his ability to recognize his relationship with me and to credit it with a friendly dimension. I had a sense of relaxation as I noticed a capacity for human contact in Lorenzo, which I had never found in him before. As I have tried to convey, he had usually transmitted a feeling of tension to me, which was associated with alternation between frustration at my lack of human contact with him and fear of his own aggressiveness.

Lorenzo then immediately added that, in the dream, things were not as he expected: the situation was not one of my analyzing him, but something more like "being together to share an experience." I thought that, for a patient like Lorenzo with strong paranoid traits, the atmosphere of the dream, and particularly my presence in it, marked an important positive development. I let him go on without interruption, and he told me that his three-year-old son had finally started to eat again, after days of eating almost nothing. Among other things, he wondered why the little boy had urged him insistently to eat some chocolates the boy had brought to him. Despite his initial perplexity, Lorenzo had eaten them, to the child's great satisfaction.

I thought to myself, again with satisfaction, that he was no longer experiencing his feelings as boundless and absolute, as he had at the beginning of his analysis. He had developed to the point that he could deal with an instinct (e.g., eating, with its implications of love and hatred connected to the primitive cannibalistic level) without being overwhelmed by confusion (confusing, for example, the chocolate and his son who was offering it to him, and then eating them both).

The same thing was happening in the analytic relationship, so that the patient was beginning to be able to distinguish what he got in analysis from the person of the analyst. This change also seemed to me to be connected with his desire to keep his raincoat on, which suggested that his feelings were no longer experi-

enced as a flood, but rather as a light shower, for which he had his raincoat—or, in other words, exactly the mental filter he needed. At the same time, the raincoat signified the start of his differentiating himself from me, which he was now able to tolerate.

I commented briefly that he now felt more relaxed and less distrustful, and was able to take the mental food that emerged from analysis, as well as what his son offered him. While I was talking, the patient nodded as if in agreement. Meanwhile, I continued to feel a sense of human contact with him, together with a physical sensation of heat on my back. Then he went back to talking about his dream, saying that *he saw himself standing up while I, who seemed to be sitting on a stool in front of him, leaned forward to allow him easier access to some food on one of two small tables near me*. He added that I seemed to have a very long back that tapered to the waist, as in some very tall women—models, for example. His association to this was that he liked and admired that type of woman, and had had the opportunity to have relationships with some of them.

*Parallels between the Analytic Relationship and the Patient's Internal Functioning*

Whereas up to that point, Lorenzo's communications had been focused on characteristics of our relationship, in these last associations I noted a *change of symbolic register*, which riveted my attention since it brought into play what seemed clearly to be significant references to his mental functioning. In the latest dream, there were—hardly by accident—two small tables, rather than just one. This seemed a clear means by which to differentiate between the individual ways of relating to food of the analyst and the analysand. Lorenzo, in fact, gave a detailed description of his own manner of allowing himself access to something to eat, emphasizing the fact that the analyst's back traced the space that separated his mouth from the food. The characteristics associated with the analyst's back could thus become significant contributions toward understanding the internal relationship that Lorenzo was beginning to form with his instincts more generally.

It struck me at once that the flexibility of the figure of the analyst in the dream was in distinct contrast to the patient's extreme *inflexibility* and need to control. His reference to fashion models was particularly striking in that it linked the physical dimension with the ability to look. This seemed to offer a lead-in to a mental dimension, in the sense that Lorenzo began to "look" at his own body, his own sensations and emotions, thanks to my willingness to function as a sort of fashion model who "put on" his feelings like garments—my willingness, in other words, to "become" his body through his intense projective identification. At these moments, there seemed to be an obvious reference to the role of analyst *qua* object endowed with reverie (Bion 1962), which served to mobilize the patient's perception and self-knowledge.

In my intervention, I connected this association—the fact that he *admired* (the Italian verb is *ammirare*) models' bodies—with his starting to *look* (*mirare* in Italian) at his own body, making use of awareness and discrimination in relation to what he felt within it. This new ability of the patient's, I continued, was fostered by my participation in his emotional experience, which helped him activate the capacity to see himself and his emotions. This comment of mine was also met by a long silence, during which I had the impression that Lorenzo was becoming more relaxed; this gave me some idea of how much of a change had taken place since his first sessions, when he was so defensively rigid that he insisted on sitting up rather than stretching out on the couch.

Thus, with my suggestion, I had introduced—starting with the analytic relationship—a level belonging to the patient's internal functioning (particularly as it related to his body–mind relationship) as an area in which Lorenzo could become aware of his body and his sensory perceptions through the discriminating function of his mental gaze, so that he could put into perspective the sense of boundlessness produced by his emotions. Things would have proceeded very differently if, for example, I had interpreted his admiration for models and my back relationally, as his narcissistic, defensive identification with me, or as an attempted homosexual seduction aimed at denying his hatred of separation.



I shall now proceed to consider some developments resulting from this session, in which the importance of sensorial perception became clearer, particularly in regard to the development of verbal symbolization.

*The Mouth from Vehicle of Sensory Perception to Verbal Symbol*

In a dream he had during the early phase of his analysis, Lorenzo saw himself without a mouth, and only much later, after the session discussed above, did an image of his face appear in a dream with a distinct, if closed, mouth. It was as if his beginning to look at his own body, through the mediation of the analyst, had started to free him from the denial of those emotions that were connected to a primitive orality, and had also started to mentally organize the area of his mouth and the first forms of sensory experience.

During this period, his mouth and his experiences of tastes were frequently the subject of his communications. Indeed, it seemed to me that his mouth was becoming a favored junction between body and mind. One day, for example, he began the session by saying: "I've lost weight! Now I'm finally managing to control what I eat. I'm calmer and more peaceful now when I eat. I taste the food and I enjoy it much more. I've been discovering that what they say about wine—that you should look at it and smell it and only afterward taste it—you can do with solid food as well."

These experiences were an important transitional point in a movement toward a more widespread use of sensory perceptions, and, indeed, I observed a general development of his ability *to "feel" and to discriminate within his "feeling,"* an ability that he applied to sensations as well as to his deeper emotions, while he also found a way to express himself on a symbolic level.

This development was particularly evident when Lorenzo, in the course of a session, clearly expressed a desire to tear his relatives to pieces. At first, I was shocked and terrified by this communication, as if something appalling were actually on the point of taking place. This terror of mine, however, was quite out of keeping with the placidity the patient conveyed to me on this occasion,

which was a far cry from the disquieting anxiety he had displayed during his earliest sessions. At this point, I realized that, given the concreteness that characterized this patient, the very fact that he *said* he would like to tear his father to pieces contained a metaphoric element that distinguished it from concrete hatred. I was reminded of the myth of the bacchantes, with its central theme of cannibalistic dismemberment, and I thought that the patient's statements, qua communications, were not far removed from a living form of that myth, and as such might form a part not of beta elements of an expulsive nature, but rather of an already symbolic level of Bion's (1965) grid, such as the C line (see footnote 5, p. 1081).

Hence, this verbalization did not indicate a psychotic event, but rather a capacity for body-mind communication that was very powerful on the symbolic level, and was starting to free the patient from his psychosis, since in this way he managed to maintain a connection between thing-presentation and word-presentation (Freud 1915b), presenting and expressing what until that moment had been unrepresentable and unconscious, and consequently in constant danger of being concretely acted out. I do not believe it was a mere coincidence that, starting with this event, I began to see evidence in Lorenzo's communications of an ability to handle metaphor, which he had previously almost totally lacked.

The patient's development during this phase was interesting because it clearly delineated the sequence of levels that led from his body to his mind: (1) the concrete and unconscious fact of proto-emotions of cannibalistic hatred; (2) sensory perceptions; and (3) the symbolization/verbalization of primitive instincts. In particular, the patient's awareness of a feeling of hatred seemed to be the result of progressive sensory-perceptive experiences centered on his mouth, a perspective reminiscent of Damasio's (1994) hypothesis that any given emotion coincides with the momentary vision of a part of the landscape of the body.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> In Lorenzo's analysis, the sensory-emotional experiences connected with the mouth seemed to activate the formation of an analytic third (Ogden 1994),

*Discrimination within the Analytic Dyad*

The following account indicates further development in Lorenzo's perception of the other as an objective person, with the attendant intrapsychic effects.

One day, as soon as the patient had lain down on the couch, he started off with a direct question: "Just out of curiosity, I wanted to ask if you ever happen to dream about something to do with analysis." Lorenzo's ability to surprise me with unexpected remarks was nothing new, but this question really took me by surprise, since I was keenly aware of having used my own dreams as an aid in bearing the pressure he brought to analysis. I asked him for clarification, and he explained that he had noticed that a dream of his own contained elements of something he had heard an acquaintance talking about; this had made him think that dreams might make use of stimuli coming from others. Then he went on to relate the dream:

I was going up and down in an elevator, which now and then made small sideways movements. At a certain point, a tunnel like the ones in the subway opened up in front of me, spreading out horizontally, and I went inside it. It was like being in a hospital, and the tunnel led me to a building that was different from the first and also had an elevator. The rooms I could see were very large. There was also another dream, of which I only remember taking a woman in my arms.

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which brings to mind the psychiatrist-cum-murderer-cum-gastronome Hannibal Lecter. This central character of Thomas Harris's notably successful series of novels was described by Ferro (2004) as the main figure of a sort of "remarkable modern myth that perfectly illustrates the absence of primary care and its consequences" (p. 22)—that is, the catastrophic failure of the mental function of containment. If Lorenzo presented a tendency toward emotional expulsion through violence and cannibalism, I, for my part, tried to eclipse this brutally concrete level through the filter of a reverie, which was also an occasion for further work on my own body-mind integration. An interesting parallel in my own history—an acausal significant coincidence (Jung 1952)—had been the start of my (limited) work as a wine writer, enlarging upon a particular sphere of my sensory experience.

His recounting provoked intense emotion in me, the physical evidence of which was the increased rapidity of my breathing. Lorenzo had managed to represent in a dream the experience of communication that takes place in analysis, both between analyst and analysand (“a tunnel . . . spreading out horizontally”) and within each of them (the two elevators in two different buildings), i.e., in the body–mind network. I felt that we were on the threshold of an important development and must not waste such an opportunity, which might not present itself again. I took a deep breath and suggested to Lorenzo that he now saw himself and me, the analyst, as distinct people, differentiated in space and communicating with each other, and thus his mental space was capable of expanding to make room for a person who was not he. I saw that he was strong enough to bear this perception: it was no accident that he had dreamt of holding someone in his arms and had asked me about my own dreams. I was at pains to say these things in a very calm manner, almost in an undertone, while making it quite clear that I was addressing my comments to him.

Lorenzo seemed stunned by what I had said and was silent for a long time. I saw that he was breathing deeply, with some difficulty. Then he said, “I’ve been feeling a terrible sense of suffocation and have had an impulse to get up and run away. The only other time I ever experienced a sensation like this was when I was in intensive care, breathing with only one lung.”

I could easily understand his feeling because I, too, felt extremely moved. His discovery of our relationship—the relationship, at last, of two separate people—was charged with emotion, in part because it was rooted in the actual experience we had shared up until then, now with full knowledge of the intimate mutual involvement this implied.

Although I had been afraid that Lorenzo might act out, I could see that he was managing to stay on the couch and was fighting his impulse to run away. He could now tolerate sharing the space of my office with the other who had always been there, but who had never before been clearly perceived or recognized by him.

In fact, until this moment, the patient had considered me, the analyst, as an integral part of his intrasubjective system—in other words, one of his two mental lungs, and in particular that second lung that enabled him to “breathe” mentally, even when catastrophe destroyed his first lung. Now, by contrast, Lorenzo could approach and recognize the mental boundaries of his province (the single lung) in relation to my external role (the second and auxiliary lung). His acquired abilities to see himself as his own internal elevator and as a force that could endure otherness were markers that suggested he might soon be able to generalize this new capability of identifying two people as different in that they had distinct, separate bodies and minds.

## DISCUSSION

This material, I think, highlights the importance of the internal level and of changes related to it that are set in motion by the psychoanalytic relationship. Emphasizing the significance of this level does not, of course, mean underestimating the importance of the analytic relationship; instead, it implies that we must bear in mind that, on some very primitive plane, the need for integration on the internal level can be an important focus of the working through (Lombardi 2002). At these levels, the analyst's presence functions primarily as the patient's imaginary twin (Bion 1950), a twin whose importance is determined by the *function* of organizing a mental space (as when, for example, Lorenzo's dream portrayed the analyst bending forward, so that his body represented the link between the analysand's mouth and food), and hence a first form of integration of the functions of the id (eating) and the ego (the perception of space and time—see Freud 1923).

This view implies that the patient may experience not only transference to the analyst, but also what we might call a *dual* transference, i.e., what is created in the *fluctuation between cathexis of the analyst and cathexis of one's own internal situation*—in one's own body, first of all. The transference onto the analyst is the classic way of enabling the patient to set in motion a relationship with him- or

herself. This fluctuation between external and internal transference appeared in the patient's discovery first of the *analyst's body*, and then, later on, of *his own body*; it also appeared in the alternation between *the sharing of experience with the analyst*, on the one hand, and, on the other, *the sharing between his body and his mind* of gustatory experiences on the internal level.

The theme of external otherness implicit in *the relationship with the analyst* appeared, meanwhile, *with its own intersubjective particularity*, in the course of Lorenzo's session in which he recounted the elevator dream. At this point, the two subjects that made up the analytic relationship were clearly differentiated in a topical context, which had benefited from the analysand's previous working through in the area of internal functioning. The intensity of the analysand's emotional reaction to the analyst's proposition about the difference of identity between the two parties, and his struggle to keep himself from deserting the analyst's office, seem to indicate the importance of the analyst's taking care to offer this sort of intervention only once the patient has already benefited from some experience in the realm of noting and containing internal sensations (i.e., the body-mind relationship), so that the patient can delay the motor discharge (Freud 1911). During this particular session of the elevator dream, I, too, found myself engaged in bearing a great internal burden—intensely sharing the analysand's emotions, for example, in my labored breathing. But my role of containment would not have sufficed, I believe, had the patient's resources of internal notation not already been activated to a degree.

After this working through, the undifferentiated thrust of psychosis was met by a twofold containing barrier in Lorenzo: the first defense consisted of a boundary to the body, and the second was formed by a boundary to the existence of external otherness. In order to be introjected into his mental functioning, these two boundaries had had to be concretely tested in the context of the analysis. Thus, *therapeutic action* in this case was realized principally through remedying the loss of reality that is characteristic of psychosis (Freud 1924), as well as through restoring the continuity be-

tween body, affects, and thought (Lombardi 2000), which had previously been shattered by the surfacing of unthinkable emotions.

It should also be added that the *therapeutic benefit* (Renik 2001) resulting from my analytic work with Lorenzo (not all of which I can elaborate here) was not limited to dealing with the danger of his aggressive acting out and his psychotic symptoms, but also had other important effects on his life, such as his giving up perverse practices and his newly acquired ability to experience profound emotional relationships. Then, too, in his professional life, he was able to break away from the family business and to set up his own successful, independent company.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, I think this case highlights the problems inherent in considering the interspsychic level in psychoanalysis without taking account of the intrapsychic level, and vice versa. I have examined the importance of interaction in the exchanges that make up the analytic relationship; in this context, the analyst is called upon to put up with the paradox of being simultaneously another person and an expression of the patient's own internal world. This means that the analyst must be careful to consider not only relational developments, but also how what happens in the analytic relationship affects the patient's mental functioning.

In the case at hand, it became clear that I had to keep the bodily processes, which exist at the very root of mental functioning (Freud 1915a), involved in the psychoanalytic process. Despite the tenet that the absence in analysis of the analyst's body—hidden from the eyes of the patient stretched out on the couch—is a guarantee of the neutrality of the transference (Pontalis 1990), various analysts have recently been at pains to emphasize, more or less explicitly, the connection with the body, whether with respect to the necessity of learning to live within one's own skin (Gabbard 2001), to corporeal downloading of mental working through (Ogden 2001), to the negative influence of unconscious anxieties that block bodily involvement (Jacobs 2001), to the "invasive" impediments

to the differentiation of psyche-soma in severely disturbed individuals (Williams 2004), to the emotional implications of corporeal experiences (Quinodoz 2003), or to the transition from explosive sensoriality to thinking (Ferro 2003).

The concreteness of the body and the ethological level of the emotions contained within it resurface explosively in the manifestations of psychosis. This context requires a specific kind of participation from the analyst, in which the willingness to be personally and emotionally involved is central. The fact that the analyst, thanks to his or her own analysis and to the consequent ability to analyze him- or herself, is able to hear *the profound resonances arising from primordial aspects of the analyst's own corporality in its connection with primitive instincts* (Freud 1915a; Winnicott 1949)—as was true in this case, particularly in regard to a destructive and homicidal hatred—seems to be, in these clinical contexts, decisive for the patient's development. The analyst, delving deeply into a relationship with him- or herself, offers, in the intersubjective exchange of the analytic relationship, a critical catalytic element that enables the patient to approach his or her own internal level, benefiting from the organizing role of the boundaries of the body and the relationship with the other, leading ultimately to the patient's ability to construct appropriate ego boundaries.

A situation of this sort, in which the presence of the analyst as a person is indispensable, in part based on palpable physicality, must, however, be flexible enough to accommodate changes brought about by the various developmental stages of the clinical procedure. The material I have presented here provides an example of how, in difficult cases, the psychoanalytic process moves forward by passing through *levels of functioning* that are permeated with undifferentiation and concreteness: levels in which, for instance, such terms as *the person of the analyst*, *the mind*, and *otherness* do not yet possess the meaning that they will have at more evolved and symbolic levels.

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## **"ON MY WAY HERE, I PASSED A MAN WITH A SCAB": UNDERSTANDING A CASE OF SEVERE OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER**

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*The author describes the psychoanalysis of "John" to illustrate her view of the psychodynamic organization of obsessive-compulsive disorder. She begins with Freud's recognition of the patient's sadism and of the patient's terror of the oedipal situation, which led to the regression to the anal-erotic level of psychic organization. The author then calls upon ideas from contemporary British object relations theory to describe the damage to the objects and to the sense of self in the individual's inner world that occurs as a further defense when overwhelming danger is experienced. This integrated conceptualization is clearly illustrated in John's clinical material.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Analysis of the transference reveals the dangerous aggression that patients with obsessive-compulsive disorder unconsciously imagine within themselves and their objects, as well as terror of such impulses, often specifically when oedipal strivings are stirred. Freud (1909) wrote that obsessional neurosis may be created when there is a split between love and hatred from a very early age in a person's erotic life, and his or her sadism "is able to persist, and even grow" (p. 239) because it remains apart from consciousness and apart from love (which also grows to keep the hatred repressed).

Sadomasochistic relating, which allows both the aggressive impulse (sadism) and the “undoing” reparative response (masochistic submission), may also result and become a prominent feature in these patients.

This conceptualization was later augmented with Freud’s (1913, 1926) recognition of the individual’s defensive retreat to the anal-sadistic phase from the terror experienced as he or she approaches the “genital organization (of the phallic phase)” (1926, p. 113). The classical theory of obsessive-compulsive disorder outlines the individual’s defensive regression to the anal-sadistic stage, with the risky oedipal aim averted and defensive maneuvers employed to manage anal-sadistic aims, which are “exceptionally strongly developed” (Freud 1909, p. 240). This regression results in doubting, omnipotence of wishes, and obsessional psychic structures that attempt to combat obsessional thoughts while simultaneously expressing them (Mahony 1986).

This classical formulation benefits from elaboration by contemporary British object relations theory to more fully explain what happens within the individual in this regression. Along with regression to the anal-erotic level, there is concomitant damage to the development of the sense of self and objects. An anal-erotic psychic organization affords a sense of protection against oedipal-level threats, not only by averting the oedipal aim with its fantasized risks, but also by profoundly compromising the sense of self and objects, which further serves defensive purposes. British object relations theory extends our understanding by describing and explaining how the impaired objects are defensive fantasies, used by the individual to survive such a threatening internal world. Primitive anxieties lead to splitting, idealization, projective identification, concrete thinking, and confusion between self and object (Steiner 1987), features that I suggest we observe in those with an anal-sadistic psychosexual organization.

Developing beyond the anal-sadistic level and working out a resolution of the Oedipus complex occurs hand in hand with the working through of those primitive psychic maneuvers (Britton 1985, 1989; Klein 1945). Freud (1909) spoke of the regression of the individu-

al's ego functions that occurs in psychosexual regression (pp. 317-318), while object relations theorists stress the idea that the primitive defenses of splitting, projective identification, and so forth are reflected in the damaged sense of self and objects in the inner world of the individual.

Let me elaborate this briefly. In the individual's now-impaired experience of the self and objects, he or she may experience a loss of differentiation between the self and external reality. With this loss of differentiation comes a lessening of the extreme vulnerability experienced in a "dangerous" world that is beyond one's control, because now the threats in the outside world are no longer felt as fully separate, unpredictable, and uncontrollable. Also, we will see that some capacity to experience oneself and the outside world on an abstract level may be sacrificed in order to remain in the world of the concrete. In concrete experience, things can be sanitized, set in specific known places, and avoided, unlike abstract experience, such as one's emotions or the object's fantasized aims, which may be unrelenting and not readily avoidable.

As will be discussed, a related component of this disorder is the use of *symbol equivalents* (Segal 1957) around the imagined threats. The individual projects his or her sadistic impulses into the outer world, where they are experienced in such concrete guises as tripping hazards, loose electrical connections, infected blood and sputum, and so on, present in the environment; these external elements symbolize or express the threatening impulse. This distancing from the source of danger (from internal objects to things in the outside world) serves a defensive function. However, such dangers, now perceived in the environment, feel quite real and truly terrifying, in and of themselves, to the individual with this disorder.

In sum, and to be illustrated in the following clinical material, the essential elements in obsessive-compulsive disorder are understood here as the imagining of catastrophe, often specifically in the desire for the oedipal object; then, in the defensive retreat to the anal-erotic level of psychic organization, there will be concomitant impaired development of the self and objects, which provides fur-

ther defense (as well as further difficulties). This includes the formation of an undifferentiated self, the literal experience of fantasies and metaphors that express the imagined catastrophe in the individual's now-limited use of abstract cognitive processes, and a limited capacity to psychically construct a manageable oedipal triangle.

I propose that these dynamics may be seen in obsessive-compulsive disorder in a milder way, one that is more integrated into healthier parts of the personality in less disturbed patients, and as a predominant and more consuming aspect of the personality in more disturbed patients. Along the obsessive-compulsive spectrum that runs from high-functioning neurotic at one end to a borderline, more disturbed level at the other end, my patient John might be located toward the disturbed end of the range, perhaps even belonging to the group of the most disturbed patients with OCD, as described by Anna Freud (1966). Developmental regression from the oedipal to the anal-sadistic stage will be seen clearly in the clinical material that I will present of my severely disturbed patient.

Over the course of his psychoanalysis, it became evident that whatever additional diagnoses might be assigned to this obsessive-compulsive patient, based upon different ways of viewing the clinical picture (e.g., borderline, paranoid, and so on) and whatever were the factors that led to the particular severity of his disorder, John retreated to an anal-erotic, obsessive-compulsive defensive organization in his effort to "[fend] off the libidinal demands of the Oedipus complex" (Freud 1926, p. 113), as John experienced it, which terrified him. Also, whether in a mild or severe manifestation of the illness, understanding that the fantasy of the dangerous oedipal situation is experienced with massive projective identification (Joseph 1988; Klein 1946) and symbol equivalents (Segal 1957) is crucial to our grasp of the mental life of the obsessive-compulsive.

While some may feel that the conclusions expressed here can be only narrowly applied, I believe that I am presenting a concise view that integrates different theoretical frames of reference and speaks to the broad spectrum of OCD presentation. Simply put, I suggest that the more disturbed the individual, the more such disordered thinking permeates his or her affective life (see Searles

1962, p. 47). The severe nature of John's disorder actually illustrates the psychodynamics of OCD as outlined here in the most distilled and stark way.

## CLINICAL EXAMPLE

John, in his late forties, an intelligent, pleasantly mannered accountant with a good sense of humor, sought help for his terror of contamination and his compulsive checking, washing, and avoidance of perceived contaminants and blood. He reported a great deal of suffering, feeling robbed of normality in daily life, burdened by ordinary chores, and lacking a sense of "flow" between activities, as he felt compelled to check and wash for hours after certain tasks. Initially, he reported living in only part of his apartment because the other portion contained items (such as piles of old newspapers and unwashed clothing) that he believed to be contaminated with feces from his cats. Since the feces might contain feline toxoplasmosis, he explained, he could not throw away these items or launder them, since that might expose the neighbors in his apartment building to this disease. He had also been reluctant to risk contaminating his cleaning tools, so he was unable to clean his home. When his desk seemed to be contaminated as well, he would hold up his bookkeeping ledgers in mid-air while working on them.

John was able to retain employment, although he could not advance on his jobs because he was very slow to complete projects; he repeatedly checked for accuracy. Although a certified public accountant, he sometimes accepted lower-level jobs as a bookkeeper or an assistant due to these challenges.

In public, John was terrified to walk past reddened or darkened spots or smears that he thought could be contaminated blood. If he had visual contact with such a spot, he felt that the contamination might have touched him. He avoided going near hospitals or encountering hospital workers for fear of coming in contact with the HIV virus. He was afraid to see anyone with reddened or scabbed skin, thinking he could become infected with HIV and the hepatitis C virus. He had difficulty walking in parks or near grass or plants for fear of coming into contact with Lyme-diseased ticks.



John was terrified that, should he pick up one of these contagions, he might transmit the disease to a neighbor, a friend, or his analyst.

Another of John's fears related to electrical cords; sometimes, he would return to a cord he had passed in order to scrutinize the electrical outlet, plug, and cord itself to see if he had dislodged or disturbed anything. He thought he might have done so even when he had no awareness of physical contact. In my waiting room, this behavior occurred frequently in front of the electrical cord of the air conditioner. In addition, when he entered the waiting room, John would slam the door from the inside and continue pushing it shut, to ensure that indeed it was closed and locked to protect against intruders. He gingerly walked into the consulting room, afraid to disturb the rug and create a tripping hazard for me.

When treatment began, John had not had sexual relations for years, and he masturbated only to images of women who had given him implicit permission to do so—girls posing in pornographic magazines and memories of lovers from long ago. After some time in psychotherapy, he began addressing his celibate lifestyle and felt a sudden upsurge in his moderately repressed sexual drives. This confused, frightened, and excited him. He readily grasped the value of more intensive treatment at this point and accepted my recommendation for psychoanalysis. He began at four sessions per week and eagerly accepted a fifth when it became available in my schedule.

Crude erotic fantasies involving me, or rather me as body parts, erupted in the first hour. For example, he excitedly spoke of his desire to touch me sexually, describing the anatomical parts of the vagina as if separate from the whole body and personality of a woman. At the same time, his comments on my appearance and assumed religion aimed at degrading me. Deeply pained remorse (just as with Freud's Rat Man), with fantasies to comfort his emotionally wounded analyst, followed.

### *John's History*

John was reared by both parents in a rural area of the Midwest. His mother went to her job during the hours when his father was

home from work, enabling the parents to share in his care. John recalled, from before aged four, often seeing his parents fighting. He described coming upon them holding up kitchen chairs toward each other while he, flooded with anxiety, retreated to his room to talk to a comforting stuffed animal. He observed when a little older that his parents' fights usually began with his mother's running out of the parental bedroom, his father in pursuit. Then, while his father physically assaulted his mother, John impotently clung to her leg, unable to protect her. The next day, John's mother would show him the bruises over her arms and on her torso and say, "You should see what your father did!"

When his father was away on frequent business trips, John was delighted. He would sleep in his mother's big bed, next to her. In his analysis, he retrieved the joyful memory of reading newspapers in bed with her before falling asleep—looking as though he were reading the news when he was actually looking at the comic strips.

The patient also reported the memory that, at five to six years of age, he told his mother of an "itch" he had; and, soon afterward, his pediatrician said to his mother, "We'll get him while he's sleeping." John told me that, during that conversation, his mother "jokingly" said to the doctor, "I know he masturbates. He lies on his stomach with his hands on his penis and rocks and masturbates." The patient was then recircumcised in a hospital, he said, "because it was not done right the first time"; he was left with permanent scars on his penis. At about age seven, he underwent a tonsillectomy.

John saw his mother care for his very ill father before he died of a cancer recurrence when John was eleven years old. This death reinforced the patient's feelings of omnipotence, as he clearly remembered having had an earlier death wish toward his father. He also tearfully recounted his own cruelty to a series of pets in the years before adolescence.

When the patient was older and while alone in his mother's bedroom, he would masturbate on her bed, ostensibly to keep from getting his own bedding wet. He recalled adolescent fantasies of committing rape. With horror and shame, he recollected for the first

time his long-repressed fantasies of begging his mother to engage in consensual sex, and, if she refused, of raping her and then murdering her to hide the crime. He had long remembered having had in adolescence a similar fantasy involving a young woman.

John dated and was sexually involved with a series of women during and immediately after his college years. His memories revealed his emotionally degrading behavior toward the women he dated. In front of one girlfriend, he asked another woman out on a date. Another time, he was hostilely disapproving of a girlfriend when she spent an evening away from him with a woman friend who was visiting from out of town. When these girlfriends ended the relationship with him, he felt bereft. In analysis, he repeatedly shared the prominent memory of one college girlfriend who was surprised that he shook in fear upon seeing her naked body. He himself had no awareness of the fear that she witnessed in him, nor did he understand it. Perhaps seeing his girlfriend naked stirred his latency-age memory of his mother's once teasing him in front of his father for John's coming into the bathroom "to see" her naked in the bathtub—which might have evoked his castration anxiety upon visual possession of his mother's naked body.

After college, John moved to a small seaside town with a seasonally changing population, where he rented a cottage. His first job there involved hauling very heavy logs off the beach, which he believed led to the injury of one of his testicles. John said, "My doctor told me, 'This testicle is dead.'" He regretted that he had masturbated the morning before the injury occurred because he imagined that masturbating, followed by physical strain, might have led to the ensuing testicular atrophy. John spoke of distress at this bodily injury, though he did not remember his reaction to the earlier surgeries, which were only vaguely recalled.

Eventually, John settled into a long-term, loving friendship with a former girlfriend and sexual partner, Betty, and they became nonsexual roommates, first in his cottage and later in a nearby city. Keeping the relationship nonsexual helped him repress his sadistic impulses toward her. Clearly, his difficulties in this long-term relationship (resolved through desexualization), his adolescent fan-

tasies of rape and murder, and his treatment of college-era girlfriends all reflected his sadistic-erotic way of relating to women—which he had observed in his father. We can speculate that his sadism was both an identification with his father and a reaction to his bodily injuries and surgeries, events that may have been psychically represented as punishment by a dangerous father for sexual wishes.

Over the course of the treatment, the patient moved into his own apartment, alone, in hopes of resuming a normal sexual life, and gradually began dating; he was then able to develop new, affectionate, heterosexual relationships.

*The Unmanageable Oedipal Triangle and Regression from the Oedipal Phase*

The first step in an individual's essential task of working out a triangulation between the self, the desired object, and the rivalrous object entails conceptualizing a triangular (oedipal) formulation that is benign and not disastrous (Britton 1989). Only then can the individual address the need to relinquish the object and resolve the oedipal conflict. At that point (in the case of the heterosexual male, as in my example), the individual can create a safe concept of himself with his own female partner.

In John's analysis, through his memories, daydreams, uncovered fantasies, and symptoms, and in the transference, it became apparent that his inner world did not include a safe space for him to simultaneously be with both a male and a female representation. Rather, a third figure inevitably entered the field where he and another existed together, and a horrifying fantasy of destruction arose. In the fantasy, one of John's objects gravely injured the other, and John faced the guilt of having allowed it.

Often, the patient felt that he himself was transmitting a dreaded disease from one to the other. Or, some information that he gave to one party about the other, such as an address, date of birth, or a research interest, might be mishandled, causing harm. For example, when he began analysis, he feared that I would access and steal his mother's funds if I had her name and date of birth, so he

avoided telling me when he celebrated her birthday. Later on, when he began to date, he feared that I would carelessly reveal his girlfriend's idea for a theme restaurant to someone who might use it, and he also feared giving this girlfriend my office address, should she decide to go there to harm me. At times, John could experience those fears on a less concrete level, and would then speak of his great concerns about the envy and sense of betrayal and loss that one of his objects would inevitably feel about his closeness to the other.

Although John could only envision suffering and destruction when oedipal formulations began to take shape in his psychic world, his free associations, fantasies, symptoms, and behavior revealed unrelenting attempts to create a successful oedipal situation. In fact, one might say that the driving force of his life was to try to successfully manage an object world that he could only create as a dangerous oedipal situation, over and over. His analytic material was for the most part about his yearnings to grow up (e.g., desires to clean his apartment; to earn a livelihood; to have a loving, heterosexual relationship) and his dogged efforts to do so. But he faced never-ending obstacles that deeply frightened him (dangerous "contamination" in his apartment, "hostile" job interviewers, impressive "rivals" for women he pursued, and so on). In the transference, he was fearful to allow both the analyst and another figure to coexist in relation to him. He immediately imagined ways they would inevitably harm one another.

Initially, John experienced the unsafe threesome in the analysis as himself, the desired female analyst, and the other male representation (e.g., a male stranger, his defeminized friend Betty, or the analyst's husband). Upon entering the consulting room during this phase of treatment, John usually reported having seen a bandaged, scabbed, or abraded man on his way to the appointment (e.g., "On my way here, Dr. Haft, I have to tell you that I passed a man with a scab!"). He feared that, having seen such a person, he might now somehow carry contamination from the man's open skin and transmit it to me.

John felt unable to keep me safe from the unrelenting presence of the third, and male, object. When treatment breaks coincided

with his friend Betty's trips out of town, he imagined being forced into the painful choice of praying for the survival of either Betty or me, and not being allowed to pray for both. Praying for both of us to fare well on our respective travels would represent a safe triangular (oedipal) situation, yet this was forbidden in his fantasy. John also imagined "running away" with me; however, he would have a recurrent vision of being ridiculed by a man in my life for being pathetic or ridiculous, a fantasy in which the other man essentially pushed him out of the triangle.

These attempts to allow relationships with oedipal meaning evolved in their nature over the course of treatment, propelled by developmental frustrations. In the earliest phase of analysis, John experienced the frustrations inherent in the heterosexual erotic transference, not just because of the dangerous third figure who threatened our coupling, but because those wishes would never be gratified in any event. Consequently, he reconsidered Betty as a possible sexual partner. However, since he could not allow himself to have sexual feelings toward her, despite efforts to rekindle them within himself, he continued to seek a sexual object elsewhere. At first, John spoke of withdrawing from friendships with women who showed interest in him—for fear, he said, of hurting Betty and infecting Betty with germs from other women, even with her encouragement of him to date.

Later on, in imagining himself with other women, each potential girlfriend became a provocative figure to Betty and also to me, and John continually feared that Betty or I would retaliate. In one instance, he worried that he would bring head lice onto my couch from the children who lived next door to a new woman in his life, destroying the safety of my office for other patients. With such a risk, he suffered great agitation in thinking that he and I would have to decide he should not be coming to my office. In this fantasy, he could have this woman only if he sacrificed me; or he could have me only if he lost her.

In short, it was evident that John could not fantasize himself in relation to a sexual object without also sensing the presence of the dangerous third object that had to be eliminated. He could not

skip over the oedipal conflict and simply reach the other side unscathed. Therefore, he repeatedly regressed back into the anal-sadistic phase. His genital urges diminished, and a passive-compliant, even childlike way of relating—punctuated by sadistic attacks—was evident in the transference, as well as in his life generally. John did not function as an independent adult, in that he had long periods of unemployment during which he used his mother, Betty, and me (by paying for his analysis late) to provide financial support. In the sessions, he experienced a good deal of bowel activity (urges and flatulence). Thus, he communicated to me that he was really just a dependent baby whose aggression was anal and not genital. His ready politeness and eagerness to please made him seem like a little boy.

Later, in the next phase of the treatment, as John was dating more intensely, he seemed at times to experience me as male. He spoke of me as a powerful figure, and in the midst of that, he fantasized a phallus present in the consulting room with us, which I felt reflected the nature of the transference. At this time, he experienced me as threatening toward the women whom he sexually desired and pursued. As he moved toward a loving and sexual relationship with a particular woman, Deborah, the way in which he saw and related to me evolved further. The transference now reflected the patient's effort, again, to enter the only kind of oedipal situation he knew: He felt me to be even more dangerous, and I had to be more aggressively fended off. He said, "I'm aware now of being very careful not to say Deborah's last name as I'm speaking to you because I don't know what you might do with that information," and "I know it sounds ridiculous, but I am being careful not to tell you where Deborah's friend lives because you may try to hurt Deborah through her friend."

In sessions, John reported conversations with Deborah in which the two of them criticized me together. I was seen as not allowing him to mature and function as an adult. Also, John felt he had become unfair and abusive to me by directing his caring feelings toward Deborah. He reported that he preferred to spend his money on Deborah rather than reducing his unpaid balance to me, and

he once noted that their recent dinner tab had been equal to his fee for one session.

During this time, John occasionally entered the consulting room and performed the obsessive-compulsive ritual of holding up his hands, fingers extended, and timing this movement with his watch in what he called “airing”—with the purpose of allowing germs to dissipate into the air before he touched items in my office, “possibly contaminating” them. It was unusual for him to show me his ritualizing. Yet he now felt the need, given his aggressive impulses toward me, to demonstrate to me that he was actually non-threatening. I concluded that the “airing” ritual reflected developmental regression from a genital-level organization, prompted by his fear of the images stirred up by it. He was afraid of the damage that he imagined I would inflict upon him and, at that point, on Deborah as well, and afraid of what he would do to me in consequence.

Gradually, John began to recognize my tolerance of his aggressive feelings toward me. I was not destroyed, nor did I abandon him. Over time, his fear lessened of the punishment I would inflict for his trying to enter and navigate the oedipal situation and establish a genital relationship. As he came closer to a sexual relationship with Deborah, John said to me, “I really do need your help now—she and I both recognize that.” In his mind, a benign oedipal situation was very slowly starting to develop in place of the dangerous oedipal triangulation he had so long experienced.

*Unconscious Sadism and the Undifferentiated Self: Sadoomasochistic Relating in the Transference*

In the early phase of treatment, charged by the erotic transference, John began many sessions with an insult about my body, my attire, or my character. He also continued to tell me about his fantasies in regard to me, usually rather aggressive and at times quite violent ones. He reported these verbal and fantasized attacks with little access to angry, hurt, or vulnerable feelings; rather, he conjectured that such feelings *might* underlie such hostile images. He repeated his withering “beauty reviews” of me, as he called these



commentaries, and often reported general anti-Semitic thoughts or slurs that popped into his mind, specifically about me. After that expression of aggression, a surge of emotional warmth and protectiveness welled up within him. Then he imagined scenes of comforting me, with his arms protectively around me, "like a father holding his daughter" after she has been rejected by a beau, or of heroically rescuing me from anti-Semitic thugs. Violent images of attacking me himself with a knife or a two-by-four piece of lumber, or smashing my skull with a claw hammer, emerged without conscious anger at the times he thought of himself as most vulnerable and manipulated by me. In a frightened rush of words, he then sought to reassure me that he would never act upon these fantasies. Nevertheless, he imagined that I had manipulated him into paying me a higher fee, and, another time, that I had "cheated" him of the full time of a session.

In the main, John did continue to exude a warm friendliness toward me. He openly expressed strong, loving feelings, deep attachment, and gratitude for our relationship. He frequently reported sexual arousal and "semen oozing" in the session. His assessment that I looked attractive was sometimes followed the next day, however, by a disclaimer that "perhaps I was just trying to be nice yesterday."

One day, in an unusual ownership of *feeling*, rather than his more typical report of an emotionally detached thought, John said, "I felt myself smirking at calling you 'homely'—I felt a sort of glee to 'get' you again." On another occasion, when I, in a moment of countertransferential disquiet, implied that he was exaggerating damage to me from his insults, John became angry at thinking that his power over me had been taken away. Though he vigilantly watched for signs of warmth from me (which he eagerly devoured), and became crushed and fearful if he did not see a welcoming smile from me, I knew—while we briefly, smilingly, faced each other when he entered the consulting room—that he would later graphically report how unattractive I had looked to him. As John's yearnings for me intensified, his sadistic impulses also intensified. He seemed to be increasingly reenacting his father's erotic-sadistic relationship to his mother.

John suffered a great deal of guilt in experiencing himself as insulting, hurting, and frightening me. He spoke about this repeatedly. Despite his pleasure in wounding me, he expressed his gratitude and relief when he felt I had not taken his judgments literally, but rather interpreted his anti-Semitic remarks and comments on my unattractiveness as reflecting his emotional needs in our relationship. Sometimes, he wished to distance himself from me when he became frightened by his yearnings. Then his verbal attacks were an attempt at self-protection. However, his disparaging remarks were also his way of passionately bonding, expressing sexual desire in aggressive forms. Growing up with repeated exposure to violent attacks on his mother (who was seen by John as devoted to her husband) by a frustrated, raging father fostered the development of fragmented, unmodulated, sadistic erotic urges in John.

As the treatment went along, John understood a bit more about himself, and he observed, "I'm starting to get the idea of wanting to be careful to protect people from me." That important development in his thinking evolved in part from my repeated suggestions that his fears of contaminating me or failing to protect my safety were of a piece with fears of harming me with words. It had been easier for him to grasp his responsibility for insulting me than to grasp the latent aggression in fantasies of creating tripping hazards and contamination dangers in my office. Over time, instances of John's integration of his fragmented objects grew, including, remarkably, the emergence of some warmth toward his hated father, as over the years of our work together, John heard me calmly receive the aggressive pictures of violence toward his father that he envisioned, and also heard me interpret the search for closeness embedded in this imagined violence.

Another violent and erotic transferential fantasy erupted, which appeared to be a further sign that John's sadistic drive toward me was increasing, as he felt moved to bond more intensely to me:

I imagined attacking you with a two-by-four. I was going to say something about having your brains go all over the place, and then the image went down to your body, which somehow seems more awful to me, maybe because I saw

my mother all bruised after my father had beaten her, and having thoughts again of you being ugly yesterday . . . I don't want bad things for you! But maybe I can understand the reason I have these nasty thoughts, and, yeah, how can I deny I have these thoughts? But that's not what I'm all about, and I get beyond the squirming and see that's not the part of me in control . . .

One day, the patient shared the "vague" thought of "I'll kill you," and then suddenly remembered his father yelling "I'll kill you" to his mother, while swinging a toy hatchet. "I *think* it was a toy . . . it certainly could have killed my mother," John said hesitantly, thinking of mother dodging father, the hatchet swinging out of father's hands. "I have a memory of . . . *burying the hatchet* . . . buried it to make my mother safe." In the literal-mindedness typical of this disorder, this reconstructed memory of John's expressed the hallmark of the obsessive-compulsive dynamic: distancing from (burying) one's aggression (that is, one's hatchet) in order to keep loved ones safe.

John's effort to control me through sadomasochistic engagement expressed the convergence of his erotic, sadistic aim toward a powerless, degraded, beloved object and a defense against the vulnerability he felt in love, as well as serving another function. His sadomasochistic relating was also his attempt to organize an ego boundary between himself and the object. As an object to hurt and to soothe, I was the one he could imagine he possessed and then work to differentiate from. He urgently, often forcefully, attempted to construct psychic differentiation between himself and his object because, on another level, he denied separateness between himself and the world.

John tried to glean from my words which of his behaviors I considered to be inappropriately cautious, so that he could adopt *my* level of caution without evaluating the risk for himself (about aromas of gas in the hallway or about touching money, for example). He feared giving me *his* rules of safety (e.g., which cleaning products he trusted as effective, how many seconds it takes for a germ to perish on a doorknob, and so on), in case his informa-

tion was inaccurate. He seemed to lack a concept of me as able to process and evaluate the information he gave me for myself, with my own mind.

The mental representation of a boundaried self that exists in a physical world, which is eventually experienced as inhabited by other boundaried selves, is usually thought to be fostered in the anal phase of development (when the child learns to control the anal sphincter, allowing for growing awareness and achievement of control in *holding in* versus *expelling out* [Shengold 1988]). John, who I suggest had regressed to this stage, lived with a compromised differentiation between the outside, physical world of things and other people, and his internal, mental world. When outside reality and internal experience are not clearly differentiated, thoughts and feelings are not experienced as completely non-physical—that is, they are not seen as abstract concepts mentally held in an abstract place (the mind), which is apart from the physical, external world.

Meares (1994) suggested that obsessive-compulsive rituals, used to fend off the threat of contagion, have their origin in “the obsessive’s failure to adequately conceive a personal and interior zone which is distinct from the outer world” (p. 85). An incomplete boundary between the self and the world is experienced, so that thoughts and wishes seem to “seep into and affect the surrounding universe, [and] elements in the universe can seep into people and have an effect upon them” (p. 85). Meares explains that this represents normal, naive cognition until roughly the age of five; but, for those with obsessive-compulsive disorder, the differentiation between *self* and *not-self* does not develop due to environmental failures in *realization*. Realization is defined as the process of learning through graduated experiences of tolerable frustration that others cannot fully know the individual’s own private, separate experience, with which comes the recognition that he or she is a “bounded,” separate self.

John struggled in a psychic world that lacked clear ego boundaries with which to differentiate himself from others, as well as to divide his mental life from his physical existence. As discussed

above, he used sadomasochistic relating as one approach in his effort to achieve that psychic boundary. The exploration of his own skin for ticks and abrasions mirrored John's early experience of standing close to his mother's body as she exhibited the bruised skin of her arms and torso, the result of his father's beating her. The sensuality and horror felt in that contact with skin expressed John's search for the safe boundary that had eluded him (see Bick 1968). He lacked a mental picture of skin as robust and protective, and instead experienced skin as the permeable zone of danger and excitement. When he saw, even from a distance, through his energetic scanning, someone with scabbed or bandaged skin (a violated physical boundary on another's body), he worried that a virus would come into *his* body, especially if he had any cuts or abrasions through which it could enter. Once imagined mentally, the scenario of viral invasion seemed true in reality to John. The distinction between subjective (fantasy) experience and perception of an objective external reality was lost. Without the use of symbolization, this distinction can hardly be made.

*The Absence of Symbolization, Symbol Equivalents, and Projective Identification*

When projective identification predominates, the individual projects parts of him- or herself into the object, and the object becomes identified with the parts of the self that it is felt to contain (Klein 1946; Rosenfeld 1988; Segal 1957). That is, internal objects are projected outside and identified as parts of the external world, which comes to represent them. Segal called these early representations *symbol equivalents*. Symbol equivalents are not experienced as abstract, metaphorical expressions of the thing, but rather as concrete, literal aspects of it.

An example of a person operating on the level of the symbol equivalent would be the middle-aged man who is unable to discard any written record of a deceased, beloved grandmother, not because the notes evoke the memory of her or the feelings in talking and being with her, but because each piece of paper she has written upon is experienced as a concrete, literal piece of her in his psy-

chic reality; discarding them would be to him as though he were actually discarding his grandmother.

A second example would be the case of Donna, a professional woman in her early thirties who was filled with many fears, including terror of her insomnia and fear that she had AIDS. She said, "I feel like I've been put together wrong, like the parts of a machine put in the wrong places," reflecting her inner self-concept as a woman with parts of herself literally assembled in a mistaken fashion. To interpret her comment as meant to be an analogy, indicating a woman who simply feels she does not think and behave in a healthy way, would be to miss an important unconscious communication to me, her analyst, about her inner experience. Her lifelong fears of damage occurring to her body, the details of which had changed over the decades, stemmed from this internal picture of herself as defective.

Michelle, a third example of this type of patient, was a dancer who entered psychoanalysis in her late forties. She would sob on the couch when she experienced a lack of attunement from me. One day, she noticed on my desk a vase filled with flowers beginning to wilt. She was inconsolable, concluding that her analyst did not take care of flowers by cutting the stems daily to revive the bloom. She concluded, therefore, that I would be unable to care properly for *her*. For Michelle, the wilting flowers did not evoke her own history of maternal neglect or feelings of disappointment in her analyst, and she did not weep upon the emotional memory of such experiences. Rather, the wilting flowers were felt to actually *be* her, and she experienced me as uncaring and neglectful of her-as-flowers. She became frantic, as she could not experience the flowers as symbolically representing (as an analogy to) herself in great emotional need; seeing the flowers from that perspective would have allowed her to modulate her reaction to them.

John had a similar way of regarding his fantasies—which, as mentioned, were of diseased blood imagined in smudges and discolorations on door frames, knobs, and on the sidewalk; of easily dislodged plugs in electrical outlets; of fragile sidewalk bridges that fall; bunched-up doormats and rugs that catch a stepping foot; and

so on. Each fantasized hazard, of course, sprang from his imagination, an imagination that perceived dangers arising at every turn. These dangers perceived in the world were the symbolic counterparts of the terrifying dangers within him. For he had internalized his violent, threatening father, and so *became* this father, at least in part—filled with erotic-sadistic strivings and “dangerous” to those he loved. The fantasized, threatening agents (e.g., viruses and diseases) were *symbol equivalents* because, although they expressed, for John, the eroticized, sadistic instinct (somewhat like a symbol), he *experienced* them as real and terrifying in and of themselves, rather than seeing them as safe reflections or symbols of aggressive feelings. John did not experience perceived contagions and hazards as metaphorical or abstract representations of the objects of his sadism turned against himself.

John often felt great distress after spending enjoyable time outdoors with Betty on Sundays. He arrived to Monday-morning sessions dreading that he might have brought a Lyme-diseased tick into my office from the countryside, infecting me. This upsurge of symptoms expressed his conflict over his “disloyalty” to me in spending time with Betty, in the face of my absence over the weekend. He spent hours on Sunday evenings checking himself, examining his skin for ticks. The Lyme disease that I might contract would debilitate me, and it would be his fault. He could not experience his fears as fantasies *representing* sadomasochistic aims; he experienced them as *literal* dangers.

In addition, John created symbol equivalents in his actual world, given that he needed to express his inner experience and then relocate the danger that was felt to be within himself to a relatively safer distance (that is, outside of himself) (Klein 1946; Rosenfeld 1988). By remaining unbathed for days, he created bodily odors with which he assaulted me; he picked at the skin on his ankles or fingers until they bled before coming to some sessions and would lie down, “risking contamination of the couch,” he said. He reported leaving old pizza boxes in his kitchen, attracting cockroaches, which he imagined carrying to my office.

The patient’s aroma, “blood droplets,” and roaches, which he actually constructed and then imagined transporting from himself

to me, created a concrete connectedness between us, which expressed his experience of our relationship. He experienced us as emotionally connected because we would be *concretely* connected via these manufactured symbol equivalents. His fear that a tick from the park he had visited over a weekend while apart from me might have embedded itself in him or in his clothing—and that it might crawl off his body, off the couch, over to my chair, and up my leg, embedding itself finally in my thigh—could be understood as conveying a highly charged and romantic scene between us. We were reconnecting upon coming back together in our first session of the week, both emotionally (abstractly), and literally in the tick's imagined trajectory and its dangerous, sensual attack upon me. This level of cognitive processing can be said to belong to the Kleinian schizoid position, while the ability to move from symbol equivalents to representational symbolization would require movement toward the Kleinian depressive position (Klein 1946).

We can see that the retreat from symbolization serves a defensive function. Searles (1962) explained how poor ego boundaries and concrete thinking allow the repression of various emotions in schizophrenics. He wrote about his patient:

It gradually became apparent to me that his literal mode of thought, serving as an unconscious defense against a welter of repressed affects, was a product of the tenuousness of his ego boundaries. This revealed, therefore, the defensive usefulness of his regression to a state of incomplete differentiation of ego boundaries. [p. 28]

Ego boundaries cannot develop unless symbolization develops as well, because the individual is formulating an abstraction of a *me* apart from the *not-me*, and, conversely, symbolization is fostered as that sense of *me-ness* is developed. John had created a defensive fantasy of a merged mental and physical world, in which dangerous things that were only visually *seen* (such as scabs and electrical plugs) were considered equivalent to what had been physically *touched*. What was located inside the body and what was outside were not differentiated, and ideas held abstractly in the mind (such



as violent fantasies) and actual, possibly violent behavior for which he *was* responsible were also not distinguished.

This psychic structure serves to protect against vulnerability in a real physical world acted upon by self and others. In John's life, the defensive denial of distinguishable realms (imaginary versus real and inside the body versus outside the body) had protected him from the full recognition of the existence of his mother's sexual body as vulnerable and seductive, his desire for her in her erotic helplessness, and the presence of his dangerous father, the source of terrible aggression and fears of retaliation.

In Lawrence Josephs's 1989 paper comparing Freudian ideas of symbolization with those of the British object relations theorists, it is explained that, for Freud, concreteness was

. . . the final outcome of a defensive process through which unacceptable and intolerable ideas were rendered unconscious . . . . The defensive transformation was achieved by turning the unacceptable idea which was originally represented verbally into a pictorial image and then severing the associative connection between the idea and the image which represents it . . . . Concreteness is derived from taking one's metaphors too literally, and the motivation for so doing was the defensive need to deny the meaning of the metaphor. [p. 480]

Note that metaphor is present in the mental life of these patients, though the abstract level of meaning is repressed and not consciously grasped. The symptoms seen in obsessive-compulsive disorder reflect the presence of repressed thought content within the patient, as well as some beginnings of a process of symbolization; yet such patients arrive in treatment having been unable to successfully use the products of that process. At the same time, the presence of these products, the symbol equivalents, is not the same as the absence of *any* symbols or symbol equivalents. Unlike John, these patients, who have not yet developed much use even of symbol equivalents, are at an even more primitive level of cognition, using *somato-sensory* or *body memories*, or *protofantasies* (Mitrani 1995). They use analytic work to create the beginnings of abstract

mental experience in which some kind of symbolic representation may develop for the first time. Somaticizing patients and alexythymic patients, for example, are included in this group.

Over the course of an analysis, we do not see progressive relinquishment of maladaptive defenses, but rather a recurrent cycling back and forth as the patient approaches the greater integration of the depressive position, reexperiences the threats that lie there, and then retreats, over and over again. Klein (1945) described this in the case of Richard, who “again and again” took flight from the genital level, because the anxiety and guilt provoked there were too overwhelming, and he was unable to develop sufficient defenses.

Segal (1956) described the schizophrenic’s flight from the depressive position just as it is reached, due to the unbearable anxiety elicited. In joyful periods, when John spoke of “the haze of OCD lifted,” he felt liberated from his usual fears of blood and germs, and at those times, as at other transient moments, he stayed with the immediate and abstract experience of humiliation, disappointment, and fear of emotionally hurting and being hurt. His mind did not then seek out or manufacture symbol equivalents.

In the fourth year of analysis, John reported the dream described below. He had been talking about perceiving his choice either to have a relationship with Deborah or to retreat back into the obsessive-compulsive world of contamination and hazards. He then said:

Shortly after drifting to sleep, I had this dream. I was going by a haunted house, maybe like you might have in a theme park. I was walking by the haunted house and taking it like a joke, like a theme park, and like, “This is all a sham, a joke, and it’s not really haunted.” There was a gate in front, a protrusion, like a gargoyle. I thought, just for fun, to show I’m not taking it seriously, I’ll rub the gargoyle head, and I did. Then I still took it as a joke. But then I was drawn in and couldn’t resist, and I was trapped in the magic, in the power of the house and weird things, without knowing specifically what the weird things were.

I was in the power of this house and it scared me. I woke up and took a while to see where I was.

John feared that the dream was telling him that, should he defy his obsessive-compulsive reality, the threats he sensed might actually come to get him. I suggested to him another way to think of it: that the dream might represent his expression of the choice he felt he was facing—either to have a relationship with a woman, relationships with colleagues at work, with friends, and with me, feeling and addressing the disappointments, hurt, and anger that come with these relationships, or to push those human interactions and emotions somewhat aside as he lived immersed in an alternative world experience of physical dangers.

John wept with emotion and gratitude upon hearing such an understanding of his dream. The idea that he could be free to choose a life with close and intimate relationships, and leave behind the alternative obsessive-compulsive world of magic, was quite moving to him.

The fluidity of the patient's ego integration and level of functioning should not be underestimated. O'Shaughnessy (1981) wrote that analysis can help patients halt their oscillations in defensive organization long enough for forward development to resume. Our goal as analysts is to help patients feel, over time, in less need of defensive retreat.

## SUMMARY

The psychoanalysis of John, a patient suffering from debilitating obsessive-compulsive disorder, has been discussed in some detail in order to illuminate the psychodynamics believed to be emblematic in this condition. The course of his treatment illustrated the psychology of obsessive-compulsive disorder, particularly in the analysis of the evolving transference. First, John discovered his wish to develop into a genital being, ultimately capable of a companionable, sexual, and procreative relationship. Then he experienced the reawakened dangers for him in that position. The corresponding shifts in the transference revealed just what the dangers were for him in the oedipal situation.

Initially, with an erotic transference, John feared he endangered me, due in part to the introject of a cruel father. Also, John tried to protect me from the "contaminants" he brought into my office from some other man (often expressed as a desperate confession and urgent warning that "on my way here, I passed a man with a scab"), an experience representing his dangerous oedipal triangle. Then, after he began to date women, he experienced a threatening paternal transference to me, and I was felt to endanger his new object choices. John saw me as unable to tolerate his forming a heterosexual union, and he was very frightened of the revenge I would try to exact against these women. The patient became more able to manage his affairs (cleaning his apartment and his clothing, managing his career and finances, curtailing hours of compulsive ritualizing, and so on) as he addressed his terror of allowing an oedipal situation to occur in the experience of interacting with a woman romantically while simultaneously engaging in a meaningful way with his analyst.

I have argued that terror of the oedipal situation and concomitant sadomasochistic strivings can present as obsessive-compulsive disorder when regression from the oedipal phase to the anal-sadistic phase interferes with the development of the sense of self and of internal objects, and also with the attendant development of abstract thinking. Such impairment includes the defensive creation of the undifferentiated self and the dangerous oedipal triangle, as well as the use of projective identification and symbol equivalents.

The patient with obsessive-compulsive disorder has not yet achieved true symbolization (Segal 1957), for the terror of dangerous agents in the environment (germs and so on) comes from the symbolic representation of sadistic impulses, initially felt within the self and within one's objects, and then these symbolic representations come to be taken literally as truly dangerous in and of themselves.

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## REFLECTIONS ON *CATHEXIS*

BY PETER T. HOFFER, PH.D.

The publication of Bruno Bettelheim's *Freud and Man's Soul* (1983) ushered in a wave of criticism of English translations of Freud's works, and, in particular, of James Strachey's monumental *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (Freud 1955-1974). It is not my intention here to revive in all its complexities this ongoing debate, which has abated in intensity over the past decade, or to suggest ways of modifying the existing translation,<sup>1</sup> but rather to reexamine and perhaps shed new light on one aspect of the controversy that has been cited in many of the commentaries: namely, Strachey's use of the word *cathexis*. In his trenchant critique of the Strachey translation, Bettelheim cites the choice of *cathexis* as

. . . but one example of a mistranslation of Freud's carefully chosen language into gobbledygook English. What American psychoanalysts refer to as *cathexis* is designated in German by the verb *besetzen* and the noun *Besetzung*. These two words, in the sense in which Freud used them, simply mean *to occupy* and *occupation*. Freud gave these terms a special meaning within his system to indicate that something—an idea, a person, an object—is being or has been invested with a certain amount of psychic energy, which has become fixated there. [1983, p. 89]

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that, in the aftermath of this debate, efforts to revise the existing translation are being made. Two projects are presently underway, both in England, to do just that: one aims to produce a newly translated, 16-volume edition of Freud's works, edited by Adam Phillips (Boynton 2000), and the other is a revised version of the *Standard Edition*, being developed under the supervision of Mark Solms (see Schmidt-Hellerau 2005, p. 994, footnote 1).

Leaving aside the question of whether Strachey's choice of *cathexis* is a mistranslation or a piece of gobbledygook in English, and before we can properly come to terms with his decision, it is necessary to ascertain how the verb *besetzen* and its derivatives appear in everyday German, and how Freud may have modified their usage to suit his particular purposes. In his carefully reasoned historical commentary on the problem of *cathexis*, Ornston (1985b) observes:

There is no English metaphor with a similar group of meanings. *Besetzen* usually implies "taking something over and using it in a certain way." It often calls to mind a military image of capturing and holding some place which is then said to be *besetzt*. When you ask if an empty seat is taken, you may say, *Ist dieser Platz besetzt?* Similarly, a telephone line is "busy" and a role in a play is "cast." A fine blouse may be *besetzt* with lace and a bold young woman might joshingly rebuff an overture by explaining that she is already *besetzt*. [p. 392]

I would like to augment Ornston's observations with a few examples of my own, along with their literal English translations:

1. *Das WC ist besetzt.* The restroom is *occupied*.
2. *Die Waschmaschine ist besetzt.* The washing machine is *in use*.
3. *Der Teich wird mit Forellen besetzt.* The lake is being *stocked* with trout.

A number of generalizations can be made from these examples:

1. They are all derived from a common verbal root, *setzen*, which has the same meaning and is a cognate of the English verb *to set*. It corresponds to an analogous form, *sitzen* (English: *to sit*), and has a common derivative, *besitzen*, which finds its English equivalent in the verb *to possess*.

2. In common German usage, *Besetzen* appears most frequently in the form of the past participle, *besetzt*, and relatively infrequently as a noun (*Besetzung*). Both the English and the German speaker are comfortable with the idea of *casting* a part in a play, but may jar at the thought of *occupying* a lavatory in a military sense. Herein lies part of the problem of English translation: Freud used the root with equal frequency as both a past participle and a noun, as well as in various compound forms that are not found in normal German usage (more about this later).
3. Because of its common use as a past participle, its meaning is closely aligned with the use of the passive voice. When something is *besetzt*, it is *being* held or reserved for a particular purpose and for a particular span of time. Thus, it entails an element of exclusivity, which implies that it cannot be used for anything other than its designated purpose, by any other than the designated agency. When the line is busy, no third party can get in on the conversation; when the bathroom is occupied, no one but the current occupant can use it.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, in searching for an equivalent of *Besetzung*, the prospective translator of Freud into English must find a verb—or, more precisely, a verbal *root*—that meets the aforementioned specifications and can be modified in normal usage to adapt to the special requirements that Freud imposed on it. In searching for a non-German equivalent that conforms to all the variations in which this verb appears in Freud's discourse, one comes to the conclusion that, like Strachey's equally controversial invention, *parapraxis*, its meaning is essentially oxymoronic. *Besetzung* denotes an action that is simultaneously static and dynamic. When something is *besetzt*, it is being *held or reserved* for some *action or process* that takes place within its parameters.

<sup>2</sup> This accounts in part for the difficulty in using *investment* as an alternative for *cathexis*. The former term was used by Joan Riviere in her translations of Freud's *Collected Papers*; see Ornston (1991, p. 216). Interestingly, an analogous term is currently being used in modern Greek translations of Freud (Kouretas 2003).



Strachey was aware of this duality of meaning, and attempted, with considerable inner anguish, to come to terms with it. In a long, rambling letter to Ernest Jones of November 27, 1921, he reveals a good deal about the tortuous logic that went into his invention of *cathexis*:

[The] . . . “cathexis” question has involved a good deal of consideration. Supposing *cathexis* to be the process of charging, and *cathectic* to be the derivative adjective, then I should suggest the word *cathect* for the charge itself. The form, I admit, is a trifle shady; but parallels are to be found in *dialect*, *analect* (also possibly *pandect*, whatever that may mean), though not, unluckily, in *project* or *affect*. [Strachey quoted in Ornston 1985b, p. 393]

These revelations are noteworthy in two respects. First, Strachey conceived of *Besetzung* primarily in terms of the libidinal, energetic dimension of Freud’s metapsychological way of thinking, which was prevalent in his theorizing before 1921, but began to lose its prominence in the psychoanalytic community after the publication of *The Ego and the Id* (1923), as the structural model of the mind eclipsed libido theory in his thinking. Second, and significant for the present discussion, is that this dynamic connotation of the term, which Strachey presumed to be intrinsic to its meaning, does not exist in common German usage, nor is it always present in the way Freud used it. For Freud, as for the ordinary German speaker, when something is *besetzt*, it is simply being reserved for some use, without reference to *what* it is being used for. Furthermore, Strachey’s initial method of translating the double meaning of the concept (which he conceived of as both *process* and *state*) was through the use of two different words with the same root.

Spinning forth his line of thought in a similar physicalistic vein, Strachey proceeds to reveal the tortuous reasoning by which he eventually settles on the single term *cathexis* to cover all—or most—instances in which the root *besetz* occurs:

It seems evident that what distinguishes an object that is *besetzt* from one that is not is essentially that there is some

dynamic process going on in it. The “charge,” in fact, seems almost to *be* the “charging process”; the “cathect” and the “cathexis” refer, from different points of view, to the same fact . . . . All of this is leading up to my suggestion that we should use the word cathexis for *both* sets of cases (both “process” and “end-state”). [Strachey quoted in Ornston 1985b, p. 393, italics in original]

Strachey’s word, *cathexis*, is derived from the Greek κατέχω, which means *to occupy, hold fast, hold back, check, restrain, control*. As in German, it has a multiplicity of meanings, depending on the context in which it is used. And also as in German, it appears with greater frequency as a verb than as a noun, adjective, or adverb. The Greek word can be broken down into two parts, κατ and έχω, analogously to the German *be* and *setzen*. In both languages, prefixes serve to add force or emphasis to the roots to which they are attached.

κατέχω and its variants can be found in a number of classical Greek writings. In the works of Aristotle, who wrote in the fourth century B.C., it appears as κάθεξις τοῦ πνεύματος (De Somno 456<sup>3</sup>, 16), meaning *kathexis tou pneumatos*, or *holding the breath*. In Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian Wars* (*Historiae*, III.47), it appears in the words of Diodotus, who argues against Kleon and the destruction of the people of Mytilene:<sup>3</sup>

καὶ τοῦτο πολλῶ ὑμφορώτερον ἡγούμεαι  
 εἰς τὴν κάθεξιν τῆς ἀρχῆς, ἐκόντας ἡμᾶς  
 ἀδικήθηναι ἢ δικαίως οὐς μὴ δεῖ διαφθεῖραι.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> I am indebted to Susan Levine and Richard Hamilton for bringing these two sources to my attention, and to Robert Boughner for helping me locate them.

<sup>4</sup> The transliteration is:

Kai touto pollōi xymphorōteron hēgoumai  
 Es tēn kathexin tēs archēs hekontas hēmas  
 Adikēthēnai ē dikaiōs hous mē dei diaphtheirai.

The English translation of this, courtesy of Robert Boughner, is: “I consider this much more expedient for the *retention* of the empire that we be willingly wronged than that we justly destroy those whom it is not necessary to destroy.”

The same word appears four centuries later in the Greek New Testament (Aland, Aland, and Karavidopoulos 1968), Luke, 1.3, as an adverb meaning *in uninterrupted series*:

ἔδοξε κάμοι παρηκολονθηκότι ἀνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς  
καθεξῆς σοι γράψαι, κράτιστε Θεόφιλε.<sup>5</sup>

It is not my intention here to hazard an opinion as to whether Strachey's invention of *cathexis* was motivated by his desire to portray—and, in the process, to misrepresent—Freud as a Victorian scientist, as has been intimated by Bettelheim (1983) and others (see also Gilman 1991; Ornston 1982, 1985a). Certainly, Strachey's use of Greek and Latinate terminology served that purpose, whether he intended it to do so or not. It is, however, important to judge his decision in terms of its expediency, namely, how to make Freud's work accessible to the English-speaking reader. There is no way of ascertaining whether his choice of a Greek over a Latinate term was the consequence of a conscious decision-making process based on his knowledge of classical languages,<sup>6</sup> or whether it was merely serendipitous. He could just as easily have chosen *retention*, a word with similar connotations that happens to have become incorporated into common English parlance. It is more likely, however, that he chose a Greek word because it is characteristic of that language to form numerous compounds based on a single root, and it thus more closely resembles German in that respect than does Latin—or English, for that matter. As Grubrich-Simitis (1986) notes:

The German language allows its user without difficulty to form new nouns, by joining together two or more common

<sup>5</sup> The transliteration is:

Edoxe kamoi parekolonthe koti anōthen pasin akribōs  
Kathexes soi grapsai, kratiste Theophile.

The translation of this in English, courtesy of Robert Boughner, is: "I also decided to pursue all matters from the beginning *in an orderly and precise way* and to write them to you, most excellent Theophilus."

<sup>6</sup> As a student at Cambridge University, Strachey was required to demonstrate proficiency in Greek and Latin prior to matriculation (Boughner 2003).

words. In contrast to English or French, such neologisms strike one as wholes and do not give the impression of being patched together. When coining psychoanalytic terms, it is well-known what inventive use Freud made of these possibilities offered by his mother-tongue . . . . In fact, it is a question that would repay further study to consider to what extent certain basic grammatical structures of the German language could have furthered Freud's psychoanalytical thinking and perhaps made it easier for him to adapt linguistically to the dynamics of unconscious and preconscious processes. [p. 289]

As noted, Strachey was aware that *Besetzung* has no equivalent in English. The problem he faced was further complicated by the fact that Freud had created a neologism in German, both in his peculiar use of the word and in the various compounds that he spun off from it. Given these constraints, Strachey created a neologism of his own, not in English, but in a language whose structure was flexible enough to allow him to do what German had allowed Freud to do.

Was Strachey's decision the best one under the circumstances, or might he have found a more felicitous solution to his dilemma that would not have laid him open to criticism that he not only distorted the meaning of the original, but corrupted the English language in the process? At the very least, he could have avoided the charge of creating a superfluous neologism by retaining the original form *Besetzung* and incorporating it into the translation. Just as the German language has adopted English words that have become part of everyday parlance, so have German words been incorporated into English. *Das Baby, der Computer, die Party* are as familiar to the German on the street as are *kaputt, ersatz*, and *Zeitgeist* to his English or American counterpart.

Had he retained *besetzen, Besetzung*, and *besetzt* unaltered in the translation, Strachey could then have gone about forming compounds by using common English prefixes and suffixes, as well as nouns, without recourse to Greek or Latin (except in instances where Freud used them). Thus, *Libidobesetzung* would remain the

same, whereas *Gegenbesetzung*, *Überbesetzung*, and *Triebbesetzung* would become *counterbesetzung*, *overbesetzung*, and *drive besetzung*, respectively; *unbesetzbar* would become *unbesettable*, and *Unbesetztheit*, *unbesettness*.<sup>7</sup> Once the reader became familiar with these terms, they would retain a place in memory in much the same way that *cathexis* does today.

On further reflection, I am inclined to think that the passage of time and the continuing evolution of psychoanalytic theory and technique may serve to lessen the intensity of the debate over *cathexis*. The term was commonly used by psychoanalysts in Freud's lifetime and during the two decades immediately following his death, but the frequency of its occurrence diminished markedly as the focus of psychoanalytic discourse has shifted from a drive-oriented, biologically based metapsychology to a psychology of object relations.<sup>8</sup>

Conceiving human relations and states of consciousness in terms of the discharge of quantities of libido (which was not essential to Freud's conception of *Besetzung* in the first place) has limited application in today's thinking. Yet it is not entirely coincidental that the language of contemporary object relations theory—which evolved from clinical practice, just as Freud's discourse did in his day—resonates in some remarkable respects with his original formulations. Are not the concepts of *holding* and *attachment*, which have achieved widespread recognition in contemporary psychoanalytic thought, first and foremost forms of *Besetzung*?

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<sup>7</sup> For Strachey's translation of the foregoing, see Ornston (1985b, p. 399).

<sup>8</sup> It has not, however, completely gone out of existence. A recent issue of the *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* contains the following statement: "Eleven of the patients appeared to mourn the loss of their analyst in a manner typical of major losses, going through a period of grief, with a gradual decathexis of the lost analyst over approximately a year" (Galatzer-Levy 2004, p. 1000).

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## BOOK REVIEWS

THE CRADLE OF THOUGHT: EXPLORING THE ORIGINS OF THINKING. By Peter Hobson. London: Macmillan, 2002. 296 pp.

Peter Hobson is a psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, and psychologist. He is Professor of Developmental Psychology at the Tavistock Clinic and a professor in the Psychiatry Department at University College, London. Hobson has long been interested in the development of thought and language and in the condition of autism, in which thought and language are tragically impaired. In this volume,<sup>1</sup> he reports on his and others' investigations into the way in which thinking and speaking emerge out of the infant's experience within the emotionally charged, bidirectional, social interaction with caretakers that begins soon after birth. As Hobson puts it:

Communication involves affecting and being affected by someone else. The transaction involves the transmission of feelings, thoughts or whatever between two minds. Therefore sharing—and if my argument is correct, sharing implicates feelings—is at the root of *all* communication and

<sup>1</sup> He previously authored *Autism and the Development of Mind* (1995, London: Taylor and Francis).

all intentions to communicate . . . a child's understanding of the mental and the physical is an understanding of two different aspects of the same thing—persons. [pp. 259-260, italics in original]

This process of understanding starts right after birth:

To begin with . . . the infant registers the adult as attuned to herself. Such awareness is present from two months at least. Next the infant becomes aware that an adult is oriented to what she is doing. . . . Then [at about a year] the infant begins to relate to an adult's actions and attitudes towards something quite separate from either herself or the adult. It is this achievement which shows that the infant has reached the stage of secondary intersubjectivity. [p. 64]

There is an apparently stepwise development of successive levels of interpersonal engagement:

In the earliest months of life, a baby begins by experiencing people as a special kind of thing. Towards the end of the first year, she relates to them as beings with a subjective dimension. In showing them things, for example, she demonstrates an engagement with their attitudes. She has a new orientation to people, a new way of experiencing them. . . . [By] the middle of the second year, [the child] seems to have a concept of people as selves. People have their own particular wishes, feelings and desires. . . . She does not simply react to a person's perspective as shown in the person's bodily actions and expressions. She seems to *understand* what a perspective, and even what a particular individual's perspective, really amounts to. [p. 79, italics in original]

Some time between the middle and the end of the second year, the child achieves a capacity for symbolic representation that allows the child to engage in pretense during solitary play, to respond to an adult's pretense play, and to connect words with play. "For example, a child might say 'Drink' just before she reaches for



a cup to bring to her doll's lips, or she might be putting her doll to bed and seek paper for a blanket" (p. 78). Hobson alludes to the importance of parents' initiating play and introducing the child to language, although he does not address this explicitly. He also alludes to the role of imitation, although that, too, is not spelled out. Personal satisfaction at mastering tasks becomes coordinated with careful attention to what meets with adult approval or disapproval (which evolves out of the extreme helplessness and need to rely upon caretakers that comes from the secondarily altricial state of human newborns, I might add).

Self-awareness and self-evaluation become prominent by the end of the second year. A capacity for empathy develops toward the end of the first year and into the second year, as reflected in the child's experiencing distress when parents or other children become distressed, and in the child's beginning to offer comfort and trying to cheer them up. (In more extreme instances, this behavior can appear much earlier, as when even younger babies make a variety of attempts to stir and energize depressed or unresponsive mothers, as Daniel Stern and T. Berry Brazelton independently have observed.) It is evident, as Hobson points out, that they have been developing the ability to empathically

... see other people as individuals who feel distress or desire, who can be comforted or provoked, and for whom objects have personal significance. . . . The children are understanding what perspectives are . . . [and] are shaping what they do in accordance with their thoughts about the people around them. [p. 83]

Language begins to flower during the middle of the second year. According to Hobson: "The reason is that role-taking is at the very core of language. . . . Early language development is built upon the child's new-found awareness of the relations between herself, other people and the non-personal world" (p. 83). Citing the work of Jerome Bruner, he emphasizes the significance of stylized games, such as peek-a-boo and give-and-take, that caretakers play with infants and toddlers—and into which they endlessly weave lan-

guage—in promoting language development. These games unite adult and child in jointly orientating to and commenting upon a focus. This is precisely what words and the grammatical structure of language are all about:

Language takes up the possibilities that exist because of the eighteen-month-old's growing awareness of perspectives, and her experience of herself *as* a self who can switch roles with other people who are separate from herself. She can grasp how meanings are created by persons and therefore can be lifted out and anchored in symbols, whether in play or language. All this happens because of prelinguistic forms of interchange and communication between the child and the adults who care for her and speak to her. [p. 114]

Hobson, like a number of other researchers,<sup>2</sup> finds himself interested in the question of the evolution of the human primate and in our connection with our fellow primates. Chimpanzees, he notes, have a highly developed social structure, and they do learn from one another, but what they learn is *object* oriented and *objective* oriented. It is not oriented toward empathic interest in other chimpanzees as individuals, each with a self and a unique perspective. Hobson points out that:

Chimpanzees . . . do not . . . spend time gazing into each other's eyes, or engaging in the kinds of intense face-to-face interpersonal communication that we see in human infants. They do not dwell in each other's expressions. This is on the level of primary subjectivity. On the level of secondary subjectivity, too, they do not enter into the subjective lives of their fellow chimpanzees. They never (or almost never) show things to each other, nor do they appear to share experiences of the world with others. . . . The dif-

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the following book, also reviewed in this issue of *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly* (pp. 1150-1154): Keenan, J. P., Gallup, G. G., Jr. & Falk, D. (2003). *The Face in the Mirror: The Search for the Origins of Consciousness*. New York: Harper Collins.

ference from humans is the depth and strength of emotional contact with others. . . . This difference proves to be critical for subsequent mental development. [p. 270]

The implications of this are obvious:

Because chimpanzees are not drawn into the feelings and actions of others, they do not identify with other chimpanzees, they do not take or understand perspectives, and they fail to symbolize. At root, their intellectual limitations are social limitations. [p. 271]

There are huge differences between autistic children and chimpanzees, but there are certain critical similarities as well. Children with autism, according to Hobson, tend to be severely impaired in language development and in their thinking, as a result of failure of the kind of interaction with their caretakers that is required for the development of what he refers to as a Theory of Mind. The latter includes an appreciation of others as separate but similar beings who feel similar feelings, but who nevertheless have perspectives of their own. Without that kind of socially generated Theory of Mind, children are seriously handicapped in their ability to fully develop the kind of complex thinking that distinguishes us from our primate relatives.

Autistic children show serious deficiencies in the development of language and in their capacity for symbolic play, Hobson asserts, *because of* their lack of intersubjective contact with other people, rather than the other way around. They do not develop the kind of interpersonal engagement, back-and-forth social interchange, mutual identification, empathic sharing of similar but somewhat different perspectives, or delighted joining together with others in the fun of playing games (including ones that involve teasing and deception) that non-autistic children develop en route to building language as a means of expressing themselves to, influencing, and capturing the attention of others and involving them in their lives. It is not that faulty language development leads

to autism, but that autistic detachment interferes with proper language development.

Autistic children do not appear to “conceive of themselves as selves in the minds of others” (p. 89). They will demonstrate, for example, that they are pleased with success in carrying out tasks, such as completing puzzles, but:

They [do] not seem to seek or enjoy the approval of others. They [do] not seem to experience themselves in the hearts and minds of others. . . . If a major impetus to learning language is to affect the minds of others, then it should not come as a surprise that many children with autism never talk at all. One wonders if they grasp the point of talking, which is to communicate with someone else. . . . A lack in inter-subjective contact might render the whole enterprise of language meaningless except in some shadow form to do with getting a desired action from someone else. [pp. 89-90]

Those autistic children who do acquire sophisticated language tend to do so in a “delayed and peculiar” fashion (p. 90). They

. . . may understand and respond to the literal meaning of words and sentences...[but] are not so good at responding to what *the speaker* means in using those words and sentences. . . . Most fundamentally, they do not adjust to another person’s mental orientation, whether that person is a speaker or a listener. [p. 91, italics in original]

These children exhibit a fundamental inability to perceive and share the subjective perspective of another person, so they are largely unable to use language to enter into and share that perspective in the way that non-autistic (including retarded) children do. Children with autism are deficient in “understanding *people* and what people think, feel or intend to convey” (p. 92). They have great difficulty, therefore, in grasping the “nuances of a speaker’s orientation to things and events,” which limits their ability to be “aware of

and adjust to other people's minds" (p. 92). Their language is social language only in the most rudimentary fashion.<sup>3</sup>

It is significant that children who are blind from birth, whom Hobson and his co-workers studied carefully, tend in general to develop autistic-like qualities, and that they tend far more frequently than sighted children to develop full-blown autism. Hobson concludes that this is so because:

In each case there is something that makes it very difficult for the young child to relate to someone else's orientation towards the world and towards himself. This is critical if the child is to be lifted out of his own viewpoint, if he is to recognize how perspectives differ according to a person's take on the world, and if he is to grasp how one can make one thing stand for another in symbolizing. [p. 192]

The details of what Hobson and his colleagues observed in schools for blind children are contained in the chapter on "Fettered Minds." The details are extremely informative and well worth reading.

In the chapter titled "The Fragile Growth of Mind," Hobson addresses "the subtle ways in which the development of thinking is influenced by a caretaker's emotional relations with the infant" (p. 124). He focuses on attunement, temperamental variations, and caretaker-infant fit. He describes experiments in which babies of borderline and significantly depressed mothers lagged well behind children with sensitive, non-intrusive, better attuned mothers in the development of facility with social tasks, although they did just as well on nonsocial tasks. These children tend to suffer in an ongoing way in their intellectual development.

<sup>3</sup> After preparing this review, I came upon an eminently readable fictional account of what it is like to be an autistic youngster, as well as what it is like to be the parent of one, that captures some of the essential ingredients of autism accurately, poignantly, and movingly. I highly recommend *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, a novel by Mark Haddon, who has worked with autistic youngsters (New York: Vintage Books, 2003).

Hobson and his co-investigators found that children of mothers who were “secure” in their recollection of their own early family relationships had higher IQ scores at three years of age than children of mothers who were “insecure” in this regard. The “secure” mothers “tended to have more fluid and sensitive ways of relating with their children” (p. 141). Hobson concludes that:

There is so much that a young child acquires *through* others that there are real disadvantages for the infant or toddler who is unable or unwilling to engage with other people in their dealings with things. . . . A child who is not very much or not very deeply engaged with someone else’s mind may be slow to come to understand how minds work. [pp. 142-143, italics in original]

In the chapter “Inner and Outer,” Hobson reports on research into attachment behavior. He describes Mary Ainsworth’s experiments with the “Strange Situation,” in which she observed one-year-olds’ reactions to their mothers’ leaving them in a strange room and then returning to them. The ones who appeared to be “secure” in their relationships with their mothers not only reacted by delightedly interacting with them when they returned, but also went on “to become self-confident, resourceful and popular at school” (p. 153) during middle childhood. Those who appeared to be “insecure” in their relationships with their mothers tended to avoid them when they returned to the strange room; they often went on to become aggressive in middle childhood. The “ambivalent” children—those who clung to their mothers upon their return, but were unable to use them to settle down and refocus—tended to be clingy and attention seeking later on. “Mothers who have been relatively distant and unresponsive in the first year of life tend to have avoidant infants,” Hobson reports, “and those who have been inconsistent in attending to their baby’s distress often have unsettled, ambivalent infants” (pp. 161-162).

He describes Mary Main’s study of these three kinds of mothers, which dramatically demonstrates a relationship between their styles of talking about their own childhood relationships with their

parents and the quality of their relationships with their infants. I have been present on occasions when Main presented her findings; the videotapes were startling and convincing. Hobson also describes the studies done by Peter Fonagy, Howard Steele, and Miriam Steele, which have confirmed Main's observations and expanded upon them. The rest of this chapter, dealing (in a somewhat skimpy manner) with the way in which borderline and depressed patients influence the way in which their therapists feel and think about them, I found heuristically useful but less convincing than the material involving mother-infant interaction.

Overall, this is an exciting, stimulating, well-written, important book. I recommend it highly. The author's contention that thought and language arise out of meaningful and emotional social interchange between children and their parents and other immediate caretakers, rather than being simply an innate neurological development, is well argued and well documented. The few feral children who have been studied certainly did not do better in their cognitive and language development than do autistic children.

We do have to question, however, whether social interchange tells the whole story. It seems to me that inborn, genetic factors must be equally important. It is inconceivable that raising chimpanzees from birth as though they were human babies would lead to their developing into humans. Although it appears that we share 95 to 98.5% of our genes with chimpanzees, the genetic differences between the two species (and ongoing research indicates that there are minute but powerful differences within a large number of the seemingly identical genes) make us biologically extremely different from one another. After all, we have been evolving along different paths for at least five million years.

In addition to the social experiential factors upon which Hobson focuses, there has to be a neurological substrate that allows human infants to process and respond to those factors in the way he describes. Apparently, over the millions of years of our evolution as a species, we have evolved a neurological substrate that fortuitously interdigitates with the social patterning upon which Hob-

son focuses in this book. Among the multiple reflex actions exhibited by human newborns, for example, is the remarkable phenomenon of reflex smiling,<sup>4</sup> which elicits a fortuitous, warmly responsive reaction from caretakers. Also, babies are born with a fixed focus that approximates that of the distance between the baby's eyes and the breast-feeding mother's eyes. As Donald Hebb put it more than fifty years ago,<sup>5</sup> the role of constitution in shaping human development is a hundred percent, and the role of environment is a hundred percent; what takes place can emerge only out of a nature–nurture complemental series.<sup>6</sup>

Hobson's observations of autistic children are of interest in their own right. His conclusions about them certainly correspond with my own observations and those of many others who work with these children and their families. There have been reports on the relative success of new school curricula for autistic children that emphasize the central importance of building social skills, rather than concentrating on academics.<sup>7</sup> I have elsewhere described the approach taken by Gil Kliman, a child psychoanalyst, and his staff with very young autistic and Asperger's disorder children at a therapeutic nursery school in San Francisco:

The emphasis in the eight-month, four-times-a-week treatment sessions is on promoting affective, interpersonal, language-mediated, "transitive" development of capacity

<sup>4</sup> See: Wolff, P. H. (1966). *The Causes, Controls, and Organization of Behavior in the Neonate*. New York: Int. Univ. Press.

<sup>5</sup> Hebb, D. O. (1949). *The Organization of Behavior: A Neuropsychological Theory*. New York: Wiley.

<sup>6</sup> There have been a number of interesting studies of the marvelously synchronous, choreographed, back-and-forth interaction between newborns and their caretakers. See, for example, the following: (1) Benjamin, J. D. (1961). The innate and the experiential in child development. In *Childhood Psychopathology*, ed. S. I. Harrison & J. F. McDermott. New York: Int. Univ. Press, 1972, pp. 2-19; (2) Escalona, S. K. (1963). Patterns of infantile experience and the developmental process. *Psychoanal. Study Child*, 18:197-244; and (3) Sander, L., reporter (1980). New knowledge about the infant from current research: implications for psychoanalysis. *J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn.*, 28:181-198.

<sup>7</sup> Gross, J. (2005). As autistic children grow, so does social gap. *New York Times*, February 26, pp. 1, 10.



for empathy, reflection upon the feelings of others, and ability to interact with others instead of anxiously recoiling from and avoiding what had been painful, overwhelming, disorganizing emotional contact with others. . . . Considerable gains seem to take place emotionally, cognitively, interpersonally, and in language development even after only eight months. Parents are seen for guidance. . . . At the Cornerstone Center, they believe that clinical improvement also correlates with the parent involvement. . . . They have fifty-two cases of significant IQ rise.<sup>8</sup>

One component of the problems of autistic children I should have liked Hobson to address in *The Cradle of Thought* is the defensive aspect of autistic behavior. The first autistic child I ever encountered was a four-year-old boy who had been born to a teen-aged girl whose parents had hidden her away from the world until the delivery, after which they placed the child in a secret location for four months, with a hired caretaker, while they made arrangements for his adoption. The caretaker had almost no interaction with the baby. For four months, several times a day, she changed him, propped a bottle, and then left him alone for hours. At four years of age, in the hospital, he paced restlessly and would not relate to anyone. I watched, together with a group of psychiatric residents and medical students whom I was teaching at the time, while he was being interviewed by one of the residents. The resident tried to relate to him, but to no avail; among other things, he tried to stir the child into playing with him with four different toys that he thought might interest him. After a while, the resident gave up. The boy then wandered about the playroom, touching, sniffing, and mouthing all the toys—*except the four toys the resident had tried to interest him in playing with together with him.*

I have met a number of autistic children since then who have had unfortunate beginnings in life, and who also have actively shut themselves off from people, apparently because they trust inani-

<sup>8</sup> Silverman, M. A. (2003). Psychoanalysis confronts autistic children: some remarkable results. Paper presented at the Psychoanalytic Institute at New York University Medical Center, June 21.

mate objects far more than they trust people. That autistic children *avoid* contact with people, rather than wanting to know them and know about them, is quite evident.

I also would have been interested in Hobson's ideas about the significant degree of variation among children along the autistic spectrum, including those who are characterized as having Asperger's disorder. Perhaps I am asking too much, however. The book is full enough of riches as it is.

**MARTIN A. SILVERMAN (MAPLEWOOD, NJ)**

THE FACE IN THE MIRROR: THE SEARCH FOR THE ORIGINS OF CONSCIOUSNESS. By Julian Paul Keenan, Ph.D., with Gordon G. Gallup, Jr., Ph.D., and Dean Falk, Ph.D. New York: Harper Collins, 2003. 278 pp.

I was in the playroom one day with a nine-year-old girl who had come into treatment because of unhappiness and low self-esteem. She had been adopted at birth by very devoted, loving parents. Her seven-year-old sister had been born directly to her parents and looked like them, but Cathy did not. During this session, Cathy toyed dreamily with some little plastic animals as we spoke. She had a very puzzled look on her face. "What's the matter?" I asked. "I don't know if this cub belongs to the lion family or the tiger family," she said. "I think you know just how this little cub feels," I told her. Cathy looked up at me, with wide eyes and a surprised look on her face. "Do you know what it's like," she asked, "to look in the mirror and not see the face that *should* be there?"

Cathy's feelings about her reflection in the mirror dramatically highlight the centrality of self-perception in human functioning and the way in which it is anchored in one's relationships with important others. What she said to me emphasizes the connection between self-recognition, self-awareness, consciousness, and the evolution of the primate brain, which has fascinated the senior author of this informative, fascinating, and delightfully written book. Julian Paul Keenan is Director of the Cognitive Neuro-Imaging Laboratory at Montclair State University and a researcher at the New

York State Psychiatric Institute of Columbia University. He has made use of the mirror-recognition test designed by Gordon Gallup to study the evolution of higher-order consciousness in the primate world. He has gone on to coordinate mirror-recognition studies with the use of neuro-imaging techniques in an effort to identify the centers in the human brain that mediate consciousness.

Keenan's particular interest is in the way in which right-hemisphere involvement in emotion coordinates with the symbolic function of language, so as to create the capacity to develop a Theory of Mind (as he refers to it) out of empathic resonance between self-awareness and awareness of others. This is of great importance in the development of thinking.<sup>1</sup> Keenan pays homage to Socrates, Plato, and Descartes as pioneers in recognizing that the capacity for self-inspection, self-awareness, and self-representation, albeit solipsistic, represents the first step toward attaining the kind of knowledge that separates human beings from other creatures.

What is most impressive about human beings, he asserts, is not that we are able to think, but that we are able to think about our thinking (p. 5). Keenan proposes that the ability to reflect on one's own thoughts (self-awareness) is a key component of consciousness. Chimpanzees and orangutans, like human 18- to 24-month-olds, are able to recognize themselves in the mirror (dolphins also appear to be able to do so, although probably by mechanisms that differ from those utilized by primates). At least half of chimpanzees (fewer orangutans) try to wipe away a spot of paint that has been placed on their heads when they look at themselves in a mirror, something that monkeys and gorillas do not do. The capacity for mirror self-recognition, furthermore, develops in human children *pari passu* with the beginnings of embarrassment, shame, guilt, and the use of the personal pronouns "me," "my," and "I." Keenan deduces from observational and experimental evidence involving directed finger pointing, play, deception, em-

<sup>1</sup> See the following book, also reviewed in this issue of *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly* (pp. 1139-1150): Hobson, P. (2002). *The Cradle of Thought: Exploring the Origin of Thinking*. London: Macmillan.

pathy, and teaching and learning that only humans, chimpanzees, and, to a lesser extent, orangutans, possess a Theory of Mind.

Investigative studies indicate that self-awareness, neurophysiologically, is mediated by the right side of the brain. Split-brain research (which demonstrates that the right brain makes an emotional response to a picture of one's own face), MRI studies, fMRI studies (functional magnetic resonance imaging), PET scans (Positron Emission Tomography), and SPECT scans (Single Photon Emission Computed Tomography) all point in this direction. Keenan used the Wada Test to study the role of the right brain in self-awareness. He presented each subject with a picture in which the subject's own face was morphed with that of a famous person. When the right brain was anesthetized so that only the left hemisphere was active, the subjects saw the picture as that of the famous person. When the left brain was anesthetized so that only the right hemisphere was active, the picture was perceived as that of the subject's own face. Keenan deduces that the right hemisphere, the emotional rather than motor half of the cerebrum, is the important side of the brain in mediating self-recognition. This is not surprising.

Keenan reports on a number of other indications that the right hemisphere plays a very important part in self-recognition. For example, he describes several elderly individuals with right brain atrophy who could correctly identify the images of other people they saw in the mirror, but could not recognize their own reflections in the mirror. Instead, each perceived the self-reflection as belonging to a different person, either someone identical to the self, or, in one instance, as a younger version of the self—and they could not be convinced otherwise. (These people are characterized neurologically as “mirror sign patients.”)

A parallel neurological disorder is that of asomatognosis, in which patients who have sustained damage to part of the right cerebral hemisphere cannot recognize a part of themselves, such as a hand or leg, as belonging to their own body. It is noteworthy that “the denial is almost exclusive to the left side of the body” (p. 166), and that asomatognosis is never caused by damage to the left hemisphere. People with right brain damage have also been found to

show impaired functioning on Theory of Mind tests. This includes impairment of their capacity to demonstrate a sense of humor, especially humor involving emotional expression rather than merely semantic meaning.

A neurological connection can be observed, furthermore, between self-awareness and Theory of Mind. The anterior portion of the right hemisphere (the right anterior cingulate gyrus and the motor regions on the right side) are activated *both* in tests of self-awareness and in Theory of Mind tests. The two together, Keenan points out, involve awareness of self and of others, with perspective on the connectedness of the two, as a number of studies have indicated.

A developmental sequence is observable in the human child, as outlined in *The Face in the Mirror*:

As his cognitive abilities develop, a child may speak his first words at the age of 12 months. At around 18 months, signs of self-awareness emerge, while basic Theory of Mind is evident around the age of 2. By the age of 4, the child generally has the ability to pass advanced Theory of Mind tests, and the use of language and other abilities is so strong that we believe he has formed a solid sense of self. [p. 231]

The significance of all this is obvious. What sets human beings apart from other creatures on earth is our capacity to think. And the ability to think symbolically, together with the language capacity that goes with it, does not develop independently. It develops, rather, out of social involvement and interaction with others, in which one's own position and those of others are compared, contrasted, correlated, and integrated, so that a sense of self in interaction with other selves, in empathic resonance with one another, can emerge as the foundation for understanding and dealing with ourselves and with others.

Thinking is not simply a mechanical, purely cognitive dimension of human existence, but an emotionally toned and shaped one in which the intellect is just as much emotional as it is cogni-

tive. The left side of the brain executes, but the right side of the brain steers and gives meaning. The designation *Homo sapiens* is inadequate and incomplete. We are not merely thinking beings. We are also social beings. And each of these dimensions develops and exists in choreographed interaction with the other.

**MARTIN A. SILVERMAN (MAPLEWOOD, NJ)**

THE FIRST IDEA: HOW SYMBOLS, LANGUAGE, AND INTELLIGENCE EVOLVED FROM OUR PRIMATE ANCESTORS TO MODERN HUMANS. By Stanley I. Greenspan, M.D., and Stuart G. Shanker, D.Phil. Cambridge, MA: DaCapo Press, 2004. 504 pp.

Undoubtedly, it was the title of *The First Idea* and its intriguing subtitle, *How Symbols, Language, and Intelligence Evolved from Our Primate Ancestors to Modern Humans*, that drew me to this book. Unusual in our field and welcomed, leaps from psychology or psychoanalytic studies to their broader implications in the understanding of human evolution are both brave and bold. But if the old adage to “judge not a book by its cover” contains time-tested, cautionary wisdom, the same may apply to book titles. Given the sweeping ambition of its heading, the promise this holds, and the remarkable claims of its authors, it is not surprising that a book that aims so far might fall a distance from its mark.

Written by two prolific authors from disparate quarters—Stanley I. Greenspan, a supervising child psychoanalyst at Washington Psychoanalytic Institute, and Stuart G. Shanker, a research professor at York University, Toronto, their collaborative effort is based on expertise in developmental studies and a joint belief in the central thesis of this work, namely, that neither language nor symbolization, although unique to our species, is genetically given. Questioning what are by now well-established beliefs issuing from the critical nature/nurture debate, they attempt to reignite this quarrel by negating the assumptions of a human or purely hominid genome that carries the unique cerebral systems and symbolic traits that enable us to *feel*, *think*, and *communicate* (as well as to



dream, curse, kid, and torture both ourselves and others) as only we do, declaring that learning and, above all, near-idyllic early emotional interchanges, are the basis for these typically human capacities.

In a nutshell, their central thesis is that critical steps in symbol formation, language, and thinking are *not* genetically given but are acquired capacities, themselves dependent on specific types of nurturing interactions and cultural practices that were handed down and learned anew by each generation, from prehuman and even nonhuman primate cultures. This theory is supported by what some would regard as an illusion: that we have evolved thus far thanks to mothers who, through the ages, have performed their mothering functions by fulfilling various “needs” with the kind of attentiveness, tenderness, and nurturing good humor described in sample exchanges by the authors in their developmental model. Alas, if anything, a true history of human upbringing would likely prove the opposite: that affective signals, language, and symbolization—our human survival kit—have been programmed in so securely as to be vulnerable to breakdown but almost impossible to annul. In the face of neglect, abuse, and extreme misery at the mercy of inadequate caregiving, only *minimal exposure* to language is required during a critical time period for linguistic propensity to take hold and take off.

As for symbolization, some of its highest and most sublime artistic expressions have been created by individuals who received far less than good-enough mothering or even adequate nurturance. In fact, these human faculties are so securely programmed and malleable that they withstand all manner of variation in form and custom, not to mention defensive maneuvers, precisely because they are the semiotic tools out of which the glue of social affiliation, adaptation, and intelligence are regulated. But negative experiences, no less than positive exchanges, generate symbolic expression through the many semiotic mediums available to humans. Like insects, we are a particularly resilient species, our primary “fitness asset” being our formidable brains, in which various systems can interact so cleverly that our most primitive affects may be mod-

ulated or harnessed in divine or in nefarious ways, our hidden motives masked through the medium of language.

At the center of the theory expounded in *The First Idea* lies the primary role of emotions in the development of human intelligence. In their claim that emotions are the foundation of human thought, language, and semiotic process, the authors state: "The affective processes that orchestrate individual intelligence connect the individual to the social group and characterize the way in which the group functions" (p. 9). This central thesis and many of its variants are reiterated in a book that begins with infant research and, 465 pages later, ends with a proposed model for global interdependency. If this excessive stretch seems like a lot of ground to cover between two book covers, it is. And what comes in between, in terms of its sheer mass of historical, developmental, philosophical, neurological, diagnostic, anthropological, and paleoanthropological information, is overwhelming and at times bewildering.

Amid mountains of information issuing from so many eras, species, and fields, the reader is inundated by anecdotal accounts, hypotheses, conclusions, and reportage, much of which takes us far from the central idea and purpose of this work. The need for a judicious editor is felt throughout, as is the need for a well-conceptualized synthesis of ideas to summarize so much disparate data.

It is difficult to write a cohesive text, particularly for two authors working together, and harder still when the only truly common ground these authors share is a developmental vision of evolution, a view that is not especially controversial. One of the main problems with this work is that the authors believe their ideas regarding the centrality of affects to be trailblazing, and their developmental theory of intelligence and socialization to be explanatory, filling lacunae and redirecting our understanding of human evolution. Yet theories of emotional intelligence and cognition are currently very much in fashion, and our psychoanalytic literature alone, particularly over the last fifty years, is replete with material on the crucial role of affects as stabilizing and potentially destabilizing of semiotic and structural elements in psychic functioning.

One of the shibboleths of psychoanalytic therapy is to modulate and integrate primitive affects through linguistic-dialogical processes; and psychoanalysis has been speaking about emotions as indices of unconscious knowledge (as in dream formation and interpretation) for quite some time. This is not to say that the idea of configuring a new model—*Functional Emotional Development*—is unwarranted or inexact (although this book's terminology is at times awkward, and some of its assumptions questionable), but, in my opinion, it is highly suspect to then apply this hierarchical model of human development wholesale to different primate species, to "nonhuman hominids" (as they are referred to) and to early hominids, across species (as the authors do in chapter 3), assuming that we are all on a continuum, at different stages of development. This premise is fallacious and violates current genetic findings tracing the ancestral line of modern humans. It is now unequivocally established that *Homo sapiens* is an entirely different species, not only from apes and all other primates, but even from Neanderthals, with whom we share a number of common traits. Among the fundamental differences between our own unique evolution and that of other, similar species is the development of tool and weapon use, and such differences may themselves have helped generate a singularly configured brain, better equipped to store, process, and coordinate visual, auditory, spatial, and other sensory information.

Even a basic knowledge of neuropsychology reveals fundamental differences between the functional systems of specifically human cortical structures and the cerebral structures of other species. These gross anatomical and functional distinctions in the neural substrate produce complex signifying and symbolizing cognitive systems in humans that are unparalleled by and dissimilar to those of any other species. Were other primates to have inherited similar anatomical features or to possess similar predispositions, they would likely already have evolved, a factor that makes the hypothesis of a "universal developmental programme" highly conjectural. The human nervous system, culminating in the human brain—with its singular mimetic and mnemonic learning processes; sem-

iotic organizing, cognizing, and communicative abilities; imagining and creative faculties; and strong affiliative needs—is *unique* in both form and functional unity. It generates “minds” that attribute meanings to all experiences, as, presumably, the brain of no other species does. Any study of human functioning and evolution that omits these crucial and unique qualities of human life, or that does not weave the central role of “meaning” into its theories, would seem to be barking up the wrong phylogenetic tree.

To have so tilted the scales in favor of learning (nurture) as to claim that emotional expression is also acquired, not universally present at birth, is to minimize Darwin’s towering classic on the subject, as well as well-established subsequent studies by Ekman, Izard, Tomkins, and Emde, to name just a few. This is, in fact, what the authors claim: “Before they learn to use emotions to signal, during these same early months of life, babies are learning about the world outside themselves” (p. 29). This view of the passive baby stimulates their goal of uncovering the developmental steps that “would account for the shift from a reaction-driven baby to reflective adult” (p. 19).

Undoubtedly, the shaping of primary emotional expression is molded through mimicry in early interactions, becoming mediated as cultural overlay through habit and social use. But the eight basic emotions of the human repertoire listed by Tomkins are spontaneous expressions signaling various needs and/or physiological states, universally present at birth and universally understood. That they are then adopted intentionally (and even manipulatively) to communicate by signaling, and then *signifying* in ever more distinct ways, is par for the normal course toward language use as pursued by the human infant. But any parent will tell you that the ebulliently communicative, nonverbal infant can and does make plain—decisively and loudly—his/her predilections and needs, all through emotional cues that are designed to be read and responded to from the start.

Contrary to what the authors claim—that infants await the initiation of this signaling code—it is rather the *parents* who must re-engage in this affective-gestural world in responding to their in-

fant's solicitations, out of which the infant then gradually molds and modulates both their expressive forms and the physiological states they express. Here it is a balanced view of the nature/nurture co-contribution in a recursive process whereby expectable environment and genetic preparedness collaborate adaptively. Unfortunately, beginning from this skewed assumption—that emotional expression is learned—misdirects some of the basic premises of the book.

It is not clear what readership the authors of *The First Idea* had in mind. As a “crossover” book targeting the general public, it assumes far too much prior knowledge and too many prior readings. As a specialized work, it drifts so far and wide over the academic and mental health map as to confound. As a scholarly work, its literature review is designed to allow readers to become conversant with what has been written on a given subject, but there are omissions with respect to the most delicate and perhaps most complex of the authors' chosen subjects—symbolization. Key among these are Cassirer's classic work on symbolic systems and Langer's seminal, three-volume tome, *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*, the most comprehensive examination of the biological origins and foundations of semiotic forms to date. The latter is an exquisitely written precursor to the emotional-cognition ideas in vogue today, to which Greenspan and Shanker adhere. Despite the book's otherwise comprehensive bibliography, there are no works listed on this subject from the psychoanalytic literature. In my own *Symbolization*,<sup>1</sup> there is a detailed account of the differences between primary signals, the early sign-function, and true symbolic organization, as well as a developmental model of microgenetic stages of symbolization, from signal and sign use to the full functional impact on ideation of the symbol proper.

The developmental model described in *Symbolization* combines psychic functional organization and interpersonal-social dimensions derived from a consideration of the roles of intrapsy-

<sup>1</sup> Aragno, A. (1997). *Symbolization: Proposing a Developmental Paradigm for a New Psychoanalytic Theory of Mind*. Madison, CT: Int. Univ. Press.

chic separation and verbal communication in the development of the "mind," anchoring the correlated activities of thought and language use in a progressive model that is derived from ontogenetic development, but it is also applicable to psychoanalytic clinical processes. The leitmotif in this work was that what is lost to the senses becomes mind. Greenspan and Shanker have rediscovered that "a symbol emerges when a perception is separated from its action" (p. 25).

Already amply expounded on by Piaget, in his model of genetic epistemology (where the symbolic function is said to evolve out of the interiorization of sensorimotor modes), psychoanalytic understanding adds the delicate negotiation of the early separation-individuation process, along the interpersonal dimension. Greenspan and Shanker err in equating language with symbols (language is *not* initially a symbol system), symbols with logic, and logic with "objective" reality testing, as well as in making a direct correlation between symbolization and "reflection," a semantic advance that is referential rather than simply symbolic.

It is also not clear what the authors mean when they attribute the genesis of thought to the ability to generate a free-standing image (nor is it clear what a free-standing image is); for certainly a representation, even a *symbolic* representation, is not yet a thought. In fact, an image, although it may have much meaning, is not *yet* an idea (except in dreams)—which it may express but does not distinctly denote. Only words produce *ideas* that are exclusively of the mind. And even words do not automatically imply symbolic functioning, although they certainly facilitate and promote its growth.

Whereas we have been advised by the likes of Piaget and Freud to look no further for the origins of mind than ontogeny or the workings of the psychoanalytic method (particularly the construction and structure of dreams), in their search for the "first idea," Greenspan and Shanker take us on a long journey backward in time to prehistory—and forward to the optimistic prospect of a responsible global community committed to harmonic interdependence in the interest of human survival. Divided into four broad sections

that move from the origins and development of symbols, language, and intelligence to a new evolutionary theory and the development of groups, and into fifteen chapters ranging from "Representation and Beginning of Logic in *Homo sapiens*" (6), to "The Engine of Evolution" (7), and "A New History of History" (14), the very scope and ambition of this work leave the reader beguiled and confused.

With forays into such topics as autism and its therapy, neurology, Inuit survival habits and culture, prehuman existence, group formation, and extensive adventures with captive primates, tenderly recounted, this is a turbulent ride in a sea of information that is courageously, but thinly, held together by developmental ideas laid out in Greenspan's model of Functional Emotional Development. The stages of the latter become a template and yardstick against which to measure and assess categories as disparate as the great apes and primates, prehistoric humans, groups and culture, the evolution of "ideas" through ancient civilizations and modern history, and—finally—global politics.

According to Greenspan and Shanker's view of intelligence, "the greater and more complex the emotional communication in which a species engages, the higher its intelligence" (p. 105). This basic theorem serves as a justification for lengthy and detailed excursions into the habits of various primate species, with the purpose of finding evolutionary parallels between us—or just how "human" chimps really are! Shanker goes so far as to say that in strict paleoanthropological terms, "chimps and gorillas are actually hominids" (p. 103).

There are other baffling declarations of this kind interspersed throughout the book, one of the most noteworthy being "Most members of the animal kingdom can form images" (p. 36)—a statement that can only be countered by "How do they know?" The forays into the observation of the social patterns and sign learning of tamarins, marmosets, bonobos, macaques, rhesus monkeys, and chimpanzees are interesting, but they impress me as taking us far afield from the study and understanding of the human mind and its "ideas." To posit that "there are no known mecha-

nisms that *fully* account for the ‘meaningful’ use of ideas” (p. 52, italics in original) misses the primal impetus of human evolution and adaptation—that is, that it could be operationalized only by a mind that wants to *know* and to *record*, to *observe* and *understand*, to *mark*, *chronicle*, and *narrate*, to *create* and *build* its own world according to its own “ideas.” As Piaget observed, careful scrutiny of the human child’s mental development provides research avenues that are more direct and less inferential than detours through other species and prehistory.

The problem of method haunts this work, in which the accumulation of a large quantity of disparate data substitutes for methodological cohesion and conceptual synthesis. Serious questions can be raised about the linear view of evolution, implying an increasingly progressive human mind, rather than the same mind applying its same adaptive/creative abilities with ever-increasing knowledge and technological mastery, a view that is consonant with those of the eminent anthropologist Marshak. A linear ascendance has to be illusory, since early humans would have had to be adapting and surviving in far harsher conditions than ours, ensuring evolutionary advances through more and more effective survival strategies. The points in evolutionary history at which, say, burial sites, cave art, engraved batons, or clothing and adornments emerged are evidential milestones in the manifestations of the minds of people with sophisticated symbolic and cognitive capacities—perhaps less complex and technologically evolved than contemporary humans, but certainly as smart.

It is not that a theory emphasizing the “seamless relationship between emotional and cognitive experience” (p. 52) is wrong, but that its elemental truth requires further articulation along the lines of recognizing that feelings and emotions, as *felt* or *meaningful* experiences, are prone to quickly acquire *forms* in minds that generate images. This takes us into the world of a strictly *human* psyche, where dreams, art, architecture, and philosophy stand alongside interpersonal relationships. *Meaning* is the distillate of emotion in the alchemy of human intelligence; it is impossible to reduce human mentality to affective stages without addressing sig-



nification as a *formulative* process, from very early on. The emotional developmental program envisioned by Greenspan and Shanker is primarily concerned with relational, interpersonal, or the social and societal aspects of functional intelligence, ignoring the realms of primary process, dreams, the function of art, and the whole inventive panoply of psychological defenses, beginning with repression—all products of a uniquely human adaptive intelligence that not only feels, but also *signifies* experience. Language is poetry, not merely communication. Animals fight to mate or for territory; humans will die for their beliefs.

Freud is mentioned only once or twice in this book and spared the authors' disenchantment with other idols; most intellectual heavyweights who are discussed, except Descartes (who is actually the major culprit for the emotion/reason split), are found wanting and are toppled from their pedestals, including Darwin, Piaget, Chomsky, Pinker, Levi-Strauss, Bowlby, LeDoux, Dennet, and even Damasio—the renowned contemporary neurologist who champions emotional-cognition unity!

Nevertheless, there are some important elements in the Functional Emotional Developmental Model, which is the centerpiece of the book—particularly the emphasis on joint attention, the value of lengthy sequencing of interchanges, self-regulation, interactive problem-solving, and reflective thought. The writing is uneven from chapter to chapter. But the book contains an enormous amount of information, and if you land on your topic of interest, you will find much to learn. Even with the broad departure in subject matter to hypothesized developmental levels in groups, societies, and cultures, and global interdependency, the best chapters are in the last section (where Elizabeth Greenspan joins authorship); all thematic tributaries seem suddenly to come together. Here the amalgam of a developmental mentality, anchored in the emotional developmental scale, with questions pertaining to evolving groups, societies, cultures, and political ideologies, all examined from a sociohistorical perspective, has real merit. Here also emerge the integration and conceptual reasoning of academic erudition. Just as in an earlier section on the treat-

ment of autism, clinical acumen shines through. In the section entitled "A New History of History," strong philosophical foundations belie a sophisticated, professorial voice.

But, in the end, it must be faced that we are not animals like any others; we do not fit on any evolutionary continuum, in the same way that we ought not ascribe to ourselves a pinnacle position at the head of all creation. And it is neither to our emotions alone, nor to our semiotic propensities alone, that we owe our evolved culture, comfy abodes, swift cars, computers, and cell phones, but rather to our complex, multifaceted intelligence and multitasking brains. Our biological givens, including our signifying and symbolizing tendencies, must be more carefully and delicately woven into our understanding of ourselves and our evolution. When all is said and done, it is the intent and not the deed that is in our power; I admire and respect the effort behind the search for the "first idea," even though the journey does not lead to it.

ANNA ARAGNO (NEW YORK)

THE TEXTURE OF TREATMENT: ON THE MATTER OF PSYCHOANALYTIC TECHNIQUE. By Herbert J. Schlesinger, Ph.D. Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 2003. 292 pp.

**Dr. Busch's Review**

In reading Herbert Schlesinger's book on technique, one finds oneself in the company of a rigorous mind that, despite the attempt to remain jargon free, cannot help but address basic psychoanalytic concepts and think systematically. Schlesinger has written an extended essay emphasizing a humanistic, organized approach to psychoanalytic technique, based on long-standing (but not always emphasized) psychoanalytic principles from the structural model, with a Rapaportian influence. This is not—and was not meant to be—a groundbreaking book. However, it carries an important message from a senior psychoanalytic clinician and teacher. In many ways, it is one component of an ego psychological approach to technique as it should have been, rather than what it became. I found it immediately helpful in thinking about my own

work. The book is also a refreshing counterpoint to the writing of psychoanalysts who prefer to think of the theory of technique like clouds, with no definitive shapes or edges.

Schlesinger lays out three basic principles of technique early in the book and then applies them to most of the important clinical issues in psychoanalysis, with some interesting side trips along the way. These three principles are:

1. *The patient is always right.* Schlesinger reminds us that the patient's symptoms and behaviors are the best adaptation the patient felt he or she could make at the time they were developed. Such a point of view helps "both patient and analyst . . . recognize that what looks like foolish error is better understood as part of an elaborate but not yet clearly seen plan" (p. 27). What looks like a failure from the outside is a well-developed, unconscious plan to deal with internal conflicting forces. One of the analyst's questions then becomes "What is the patient attempting to solve with this way of being in the analysis?" It seems to me that this stance helps the analyst move beyond what can become an aggressive stance toward the patient, such as that characterized by the question, "What is the patient hiding?"
2. *Analysts don't analyze, patients do.* What Schlesinger is attempting to get across here is that analysts and analysts tend to think of the latter in a passive position. This is expressed in common phrases like, "from patients, 'I am *in* analysis,' and from analysts, 'I am analyzing *her*'" (p. 31). Schlesinger's perspective helps move the patient from a position of victim to an active—albeit unconscious—doer. Ultimately, the analyst hopes the patient is able to acknowledge that what is going on in the patient's mind and life "is something he is doing, not something that is happening to him" (p. 29). Schlesinger likens the analyst's position to that of a midwife who attends to the mother-to-be with an

expectant, encouraging attitude, facilitating matters “when necessary, removing obstacles the mother cannot handle alone” (p. 32). It is a position first articulated by Searl,<sup>1</sup> and, more recently, by Gray<sup>2</sup> and by me.<sup>3</sup>

3. *The patient is doing the best that he or she can.* In this, Schlesinger conveys that the patient’s neurosis is a totally unworkable solution, but the best one the patient could come up with at the time. “By taking this stance, the analyst conveys his respect for the ingenious, if painful and impractical, measures the patient has felt compelled to take in order to live with his as yet unseen problem” (p. 37). The author realizes that this is not a solution to the patient’s reluctance to change, but advocates such an analytic stance as one that creates an atmosphere most conducive to the possibility of change.

The reader will likely have picked up that underlying all these principles is the underappreciated metapsychological principle elaborated by Rapaport and Gill<sup>4</sup> of the “adaptive” point of view. It is a position that fermented and grew amongst psychoanalysts at the Menninger Clinic, but that was not welcomed by the larger psychoanalytic world. I have always been puzzled by this lack of acceptance, but it became clearer recently when Rapaport was described as having a critical attitude toward Freud (Bergman<sup>5</sup>; Green<sup>6</sup>). This is not a position I understand, and Schlesinger’s

<sup>1</sup> Searl, M. N. (1936). Some queries on principles of technique. *Int. J. Psychoanal.*, 19:50-62.

<sup>2</sup> Gray, P. (1994). *The Ego and Analysis of Defense*. Northvale, NJ: Aronson.

<sup>3</sup> Busch, F. (1995). *The Ego at the Center of Clinical Technique*. Northvale, NJ: Aronson.

<sup>4</sup> Rapaport, D. & Gill, M. M. (1959). Introduction: a historical study of psychoanalytic ego psychology. *Psychoanal. Issues*, 1:1-17.

<sup>5</sup> Bergmann, M. S. (2000). The Hartmann era and its contribution to psychoanalytic technique. In *The Hartmann Era*. New York: Other Press.

<sup>6</sup> Green, A. (2000). Illusion and disillusionment in the attempt to present a more reasonable theory of mind. In *The Hartmann Era*, ed. M. S. Bergmann. New York: Other Press.

book is an excellent example of how the adaptive point of view adds to our understanding of psychoanalytic technique.

Schlesinger underlines another component of the psychoanalytic process, which one rarely hears about nowadays: diagnosis. He emphasizes that we are constantly making diagnostic judgments based on a number of variables at any one time, and that this is a critical part of understanding the analytic process. For example, when a patient moves from symbolic communication to explicit demands of the analyst, Schlesinger wonders why the patient had to move to this form of communication in the transference. This question is not a rhetorical one for Schlesinger, but is necessary to help diagnose progression or regression in the transference. Recognizing that a patient is involved in transference is the beginning, not the end, of a diagnostic process. He contrasts this perspective with the view of those who see transference as *content*, leading to the interpretation of content rather than to a diagnosis of the process. And by *diagnosis*, Schlesinger means a split-second judgment based on the analyst's understanding of the structure of the psyche—not a DSM-like labeling.

There are so many informative parts of this book that it is difficult to emphasize them all. I have picked only those that strike me as particularly enlightening. But as smart and useful as this book is, there are some problems. Throughout, there seem to be contradictions and unevenness in the author's application of his basic principles. In the section dealing with the theme that "the patient is always right," there is a surprising example. A patient, in the midst of a divorce, comes to an analyst for treatment. The analyst tells her that first she needs to consult a lawyer to protect her interests, and, after that, she might return if she still thinks she needs treatment. The analyst reasons that if the woman begins to explore her own role in the divorce, she might not look out for her own best interests. However, using Schlesinger's basic principles, we would assume that the patient comes to treatment because she senses she needs something from it. If the analyst is concerned that she might use the treatment masochistically, this would seem to be a problem to be analyzed. If she is in immedi-

ate danger of doing something self-destructive, I assume the analyst would raise this in a direct fashion. Schlesinger brings up the possibility that his example is a contradiction of the principle that the patient is always right, but then fails to struggle with the issue. If it is or is not a contradiction, why or why not?

In addition, a basic contradiction is exemplified in some of the clinical examples: one between Schlesinger's three principles of treatment (especially the one that the patient is always right), and his view that we rattle the system via interpretation, sending it into a self-protective spasm. This contradiction is, I believe, a manifestation of a problem inherent in maintaining an "adaptive" position in working with the character problems of neurotic patients and in treating severe character disorders. But by not facing this contradiction, Schlesinger tends to undermine *both* positions (i.e., the patient is always right, and interpretations rattle the system). While he theoretically attempts to distance himself from the work of others—like Kernberg—in treating severe character disorders, his clinical examples show the necessity of clarification à la Kernberg. (As an aside, Schlesinger uses the term *clarification* in its everyday sense—i.e., making something clearer—rather than as in Bibring's description,<sup>7</sup> which centers on the identification of psychological processes.)

By presenting his book as a "personal statement" (p. xi), Schlesinger brings in almost no current literature (except references to his own work), at times to his detriment. For example, in a section on "Transference as Surface," he does not mention Paniagua's<sup>8</sup> refined and elaborated sense of surface: that is, of *patient surface* (what the patient understands he or she is talking about), *clinical surface* (what the analyst understands), and *working surface* (that psychological space where the first two surfaces can meaningfully meet). Thus, when Schlesinger describes *the* surface, he is refer-

<sup>7</sup> Bibring, E. (1954). Psychoanalysis and the dynamic psychotherapies. *J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn.*, 2:745-770.

<sup>8</sup> Paniagua, C. (1991). Patient surface, cilia surface, and workable surface. *J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn.*, 39:669-686.

ring to the *analyst's* surface and treating it in the same as the *workable* surface. Much like Gill's approach, this leads to interpretations of the transference that seem to me to be far removed from what the patient can understand.

Throughout the book, there are discussions highlighted by clarity and felicitous use of language, mixed in with thinking that seems more muddled. When the author writes about resistances and defense, he is thoughtful and succinct—until he gets to his clinical examples, where he seems to this reader to bypass resistances. While describing the patient as analyzing himself, he gives clinical examples in which there is plenty of resistance analysis going on, on the part of the analyst. Schlesinger's thinking about the transference as a process and as free association seems brilliant, and he is one of the few analysts to raise questions about the analyst's questions; yet his work on the psychoanalytic process seems encumbered by his attempts to simplify questions, so that his answers become themselves simplified. Given his views on the importance of the method of free association, reference to Kris's<sup>9</sup> thinking on this topic might have been helpful in defining a psychoanalytic process.

In summary, there are questions and contradictions in Schlesinger's work that have dogged those of us thinking in ego psychological terms for some time (e.g., working from the standpoint of resistances in the face of character pathology in which there may be few resistances). Although I have here outlined some of the difficulties with this book, these should not detract from its worthiness. It is an excellent introduction to those who have not been exposed to the clinical utility and humanity in an ego psychological approach to technique. For experienced clinicians familiar with this perspective, it brings important reminders of the health and utility of an ego psychological approach, along with some fascinating issues still to be resolved.

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<sup>9</sup> Kris, A. O. (1982). *Free Association*. New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press.



### Dr. Jurist's Review

In this book, Herbert Schlesinger, who has had an illustrious career as academic psychologist, training director of a Ph.D. program in clinical psychology, head of the psychology department at a major medical center, and senior psychoanalyst, sums up a lifetime of experience in contemplating technique. He differentiates what he has found useful from what he was taught, and he offers reformulations of basic psychoanalytic notions while more or less affirming a contemporary Freudian paradigm. This work brims with wisdom for the beginning analyst, but is also absorbing reading for analysts at any stage in their careers. Indeed, Schlesinger's book holds value for psychotherapists of any kind: in dwelling upon the theme of respect for the patient, it exemplifies the thoughtfulness that informs clinical psychoanalytic work.

Schlesinger persistently urges us to aim toward increasing the activity of the patient. He asserts that analysts do not analyze—patients do, and he invokes the (Socratic) image of a midwife to capture the role of the analyst (pp. 31-32). The analyst must strive to avoid doing *for* the patient, according to Schlesinger, what the patient can do for him-/herself. He situates the work of the analyst between the danger of “absolute certainty” and the “fear of making a mistake” (p. 44). Much hangs on how this middle ground is spelled out.

In the introduction, Schlesinger observes that, while he was trained in the era of ego psychology, he is dubious about aspects of it, especially metapsychology, and he states his preference not to probe and/or identify himself with any theoretical orientation. In a characteristically gruff but articulate formulation, he announces, “I do not find scholastic disputes interesting” (p. xii). It is a breath of fresh air to encounter an analyst who resists the dogmatism that has dogged psychoanalysis since its inception. Yet, one might wonder whether theoretical assumptions can be so easily cast aside. It is salutary, though, for an author to struggle to define where he/she stands.

Schlesinger's theoretical stance can be described as a pragmatic one. He seeks to promote what works, and resists the allure

of striving to put together and defend an integrated point of view; he is partial to ordinary language and is strongly aversive to unnecessary and unexamined technical terms; and he offers useful clinical illustrations and avoids discussion of recent theory. Schafer's rejection of metapsychology and his project of action language are important influences on Schlesinger's thinking. Emblematic of Schlesinger's own pragmatism is his dictum that "it matters less what the analyst says at any moment than what he says next" (p. 230). A great merit of this book is its attention to close examination of clinical and supervisory interactions that go beyond whether the analyst has said the right thing.

Let me highlight a few of the specific issues that Schlesinger elects to address. He is wary of pushing patients to clarify things, and he brilliantly explores how posing questions often stems from the clinician's own anxiety, causing him or her to unwittingly become coercive and unproductive. Schlesinger lays out a framework for how to respond to questions that refuses to allow the analyst to adopt a casual attitude, while being mindful of patients' sensitivity to feeling rejected. Schlesinger offers a similarly illuminating look at the issue of what to do about missed sessions—negotiating the legitimacy of the analyst's self-interest, but recognizing the liability of reducing the matter to a business transaction. One can use this book, in fact, as a kind of textbook to consult on a wide array of major clinical issues.

Schlesinger's reformulation of basic concepts makes for fascinating reading. He grapples with such concepts as transference, countertransference, resistance, defenses, neutrality, and regression, and he has illuminating things to say on each of them. He wishes to emphasize, for example, that transference is a phenomenon that operates both from analyst to patient and from patient to analyst. According to Schlesinger, transference from the analyst is manifest in attitudes and emotional characteristics that emerge regardless of the particular patient in analysis; countertransference results from the feelings or defenses against feelings that are evoked in the analyst by the patient's transference (pp. 63-64).

In defending what he acknowledges to be an "old-fashioned" view, the author seems to accept the supposition that countertrans-

ference is mainly undesirable. The author might have chosen to consider views that are friendlier to countertransference manifestations, including self-disclosure. Schlesinger misses an opportunity here, as his ideas about anticipating what comes next with patients represent a promising way to distinguish between countertransference reactions that prove to be beneficial and those that do not.

A highlight of Schlesinger's work is his discussion of resistance. His focus on the patient's subjective experience means that he is especially concerned about the analyst's relying on a pejorative meaning of resistance. As he astutely puts it, resistance is behavior that is not simply against something, but *for* something as well (p. 228). He stresses that we need to take internal conflict seriously in conceptualizing resistance; this entails an appreciation that, as one need might be denied, another is being affirmed. He also observes that it is easy to dwell on obvious and gratuitous examples of resistance, which distract us from how ubiquitous and subtle a phenomenon it is (p. 81).

The discussion of defenses forms another crucial part of Schlesinger's book. He dislikes the notion of "defense mechanisms," arguing that defenses are not fixed places, but rather fluid processes; he concurs with Schafer that defenses have been reified in psychoanalytic theory. Rather than chronicling a list of defenses, the author opts to explore a few well-known ones, such as intellectualization, denial, and isolation, and also to enumerate a variety of intriguing microinstances of behavioral defenses, such as deleting or replacing conjunctions, suddenly changing the topic, vagueness and indefinite reference, shifting emphasis, and private language.

Schlesinger is gifted in capturing nuanced aspects of everyday clinical encounters. I am not convinced, however, that in refraining from conjuring defenses as mechanisms, we are making enormous progress. It remains crucial to be able to clarify how defenses function in relation to the mind; thus, I do not think we can dispense with theory as both Schafer and Schlesinger imagine. To be more specific, I believe that our understanding of defenses is

impoverished if it is not linked to theories about affects, affect regulation, and mentalization.

Schlesinger maintains that psychoanalysis contributes to helping the patient discover how his/her mind works (p. 278). As I see it, this means that the theory of technique cannot be divorced from the theory of mind. His vigilance against the excesses of metapsychology and his aversion to dogmatism lead him not to engage theory directly. While psychoanalysts need to be circumspect in the way they handle theory, there is nothing wrong with venturing hypothetical ideas and entities, as long as one takes account of and is prepared to seek evidence for their existence or manifestations.

In conclusion, Schlesinger's book provides fresh assessments of major psychoanalytic themes and is a noteworthy contribution to the literature on technique. Schlesinger is a master teacher, and I found myself admiring the extent to which he keeps his distance from faddish trends in the field. Engaging his wise pragmatism is gratifying, even where one does not necessarily agree with his views. Schlesinger has written a book that superbly documents how much there is to know and how vexing it is to do good clinical work—no mean accomplishment in our age of manualized psychotherapy.

**ELLIOT L. JURIST (NEW YORK)**

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GENDER IN PSYCHOANALYTIC SPACE. Edited by Muriel Dimen, Ph.D., and Virginia Goldner, Ph.D. New York: Other Press, 2002. 368 pp.

This book is a collection of landmark contributions to gender theory from a feminist and postmodern perspective. Its goal is to integrate the clinical psychoanalytic perspective. The state of the field is established in the opening section entitled "Gender Deconstructing," containing essays by Judith Butler, Ken Corbett, Muriel Dimen, Virginia Goldner, and Adrienne Harris.

Here we have Butler's lost homoerotic love object of childhood that infuses heterosexuality with a pervasive melancholy and Corbett's encouragement of us to open up the categories of gen-

der and acknowledge the existence of differing masculinities. We have Dimen refuting the essentializing of gender that leads to a binary opposition with a consequent power hierarchy and Goldner challenging the idea of an internally consistent, permanent gender identity with its obligatory heterosexuality. Gender, Goldner claims, develops in and through relationships with gendered others. And, finally, we have Harris writing of gender as contradiction. It is a core, coherent experience of self, which at the same time mutates, dissolves, and may prove irrelevant.

We travel from modern theory, in which gender was considered a basic, essential category, to a postmodern feminist perspective in which gender is a fluid social construction with gender and subjectivity informing one another. With this as the base, the authors turn to integration of the contribution of clinical psychoanalysis. This is an important goal, as sociological and philosophical theories have too often neglected the individual, just as psychoanalytic theory has tended to neglect cultural influences. These two approaches need not necessarily negate each other; they may be complementary, each impacting and enriching the other. Clearly, further integration of these divergent theoretical perspectives is needed. Of course, such an effort is not without its stumbling blocks.

For the psychoanalytic reader, this is at times a tough read, as one has to bend one's mind around abstract theory that is not clinically based. The absence of clinical substantiation leaves one feeling culturally bereft, in a foreign country without a compass and with a language that at times seems incomprehensible and contradictory to one's usual lexicon. By attempting to integrate the clinical experience, the authors enhance their theory and make their ideas more user friendly to the clinician. Individual authors accomplish this with varying degrees of success.

To begin this venture, I would recommend turning to the third and final section, "Between Clinic and Culture." Within this section, the chapter by Nancy Chodorow, "Gender as a Personal and Cultural Construction," is the most compatible with general psychoanalytic theory, and hence most helpful to the uninformed reader.

She notes the ways in which the two theories, psychoanalysis and feminism, enhance each other. The social-political without the intrapsychic or the intrapsychic without the social provides a limited appreciation of gender and sexuality.

The chapter by Layton, "Gendered Subject, Gendered Agents: Toward an Integration of Postmodern Theory and Relational Analytic Practice," will aid the psychoanalytic reader by providing the theoretical background necessary to appreciate the focus of the authors. The goal is to integrate postmodernism with feminism and clinical psychoanalysis with gender, with a focus on the cultural and personal meanings of the latter. Difficulties arise with the different languages and the different levels of discourse utilized.

The postmodern focus is on a cultural determination of subjectivity. Categories are seen as rigid binaries leading to a power differential, rather than as constructing possibilities. The effort is to abolish categories. There is a celebration of fluidity and fragmentation. The notion of anything as core or essential is considered to be oppressive and a denial of cultural constriction. The political origin comes through in the language.

This is contrasted with the psychoanalytic point of view, in which it is the internal world that motivates behavior. There are normative inclusions and exclusions. Gender and other identity elements form a culturally constructed piece of the internal world that is both evolving and stable. *Core* means something internal that persists even as it may be changing; it is not necessarily something innate or true. A precultural true self is postulated, as opposed to a self constituted by discourse as proclaimed by Butler. In subsequent chapters, these ideas are explored in other realms: race, non-Western civilizations, and multiple personality disorders.

The psychoanalytic orientation is relational. Modern classical psychoanalytic ideas are at times misunderstood and misrepresented. Outdated ideas are debated, and a skewed understanding results. Nonrelational psychoanalysis—i.e., modern classical analysis—is presented as coercive, both in its legitimization of some gender identities, sexualities, and ways of being, with corresponding de-legitimization of others, and in its production of an iden-

tity, rather than the discovery of what is within the individual, i.e., co-constructing subjectivities. There seems to be a lack of understanding of how large a role relationships and relatedness play in modern classical analysis. And some of the essays indicate a lack of awareness of major revisions in psychoanalytic understanding of female development and psychology. A dated view of classical analysis pervades these essays.

The authors tend to discount the body and privilege social influence. The poststructuralist perspective counters the essentialist idea that there is a preexistent sexual difference that determines sexual identity prior to the influence of culture. It is important to consider fluidity and the influence of culture. But, I believe, it is also important to consider that there may be some basic, immutable sexual differences. We must not disregard culture. Likewise, we must not neglect the possibility of an impact of biology and of the body into which one is born.

A clear and agreed-upon definition of terms is essential. It is not clear what is being referenced in the appeal for a flexible return to the early, overinclusive body ego experience, the infantile state of omnipotentiality. This seems to refer to a state prior to the acquisition of a core gender identity, the early sense of self as male or female. To return to this would imply a lack of acceptance of basic anatomical difference, with different body sensations and a different sense of the body—i.e., a refusal to accept life's limitations. Or, possibly, this is a reference to gender role, with an emphasis on lessening cultural constrictions. I would applaud the latter, the lessening of cultural constrictions on gender role. As for the former, I believe that one must accept certain limitations and embrace them.

And what is the purpose of returning to this overinclusive sense of the body? It is postulated as necessary for cross-sex identification and incorporation of attributes that the culture considers to belong to the other sexuality. This premise assumes that core gender identity is a totally coherent, organized identity. This is a misunderstanding of the term, and it is a misunderstanding of psychological development. In fact, it is precisely this understand-



ing that leads to the gender splitting that is being railed against. Such a return to an early, overinclusive body sense would consist of a total renunciation of that which belongs to the other. The establishment of core gender identity does not carry with it the definitive establishment of gender role, identifications, activity, passivity, or object choice; there is no need to return to an overinclusiveness. The psychoanalytic view of development does not require this, as it is not unilinear and does not advocate mutual exclusivity. The assumption that the goal is monosexual identity contradicts the developmental understanding that allows for an internal mix of sexual identifications.

At times, the terms *core gender identity*, *gender role*, and even *sexual object choice* are conflated into gender identity. Emphasis is placed on a multiplicity of identifications, interests, and ways of being with which we would all agree if we were speaking solely of gender role and sexual object choice. There are indeed many ways to be male or female; these are both biologically and culturally determined. Applying this principle to core gender identity, however, implies that there are no immutable differences.

Sometimes we do indeed use terms in consort. Aron writes of the need for a core gender identity to maintain the boundaries of gender, and the need to preserve a multigendered sense in order to preserve the fluidity of our multifarious identifications. He references Flax, who distinguishes between a core self and a unitary self. Here, rigid gender polarity indicates a developmental arrest or a defensive character structure.

Indeed, contemporary gender theory does debate the place of the body and the impact of oedipal conflict in the construction of gender identity. It considers the relationship of the woman's experience of inner space and her way of knowing the world, as well as the too-distinct separation between that which is masculine and that which is feminine. But then these categories become confused with the terms male and female, based on biological difference, and active and passive, based more on ego autonomy than gender. These are important considerations with which psychoanalytic theoreticians and clinicians also concern themselves. Hopefully, a

consensus on terminology and combined efforts will lead to further clarity.

For any integration to occur, problematic differences need to be confronted. The authors of *Gender in Psychoanalytic Space* cannot be faulted for what they fail to do. They have taken on a significant project and have made a beginning in integrating clinical theory into gender theory. To further this effort, there must be an agreement on the definition of terms and an awareness of the many advances in psychoanalytic theory, so that we are not debating confused or long-abandoned ideas.

**RUTH FISCHER (BRYN MAWR, PA)**

CONSTRUCTING AND DECONSTRUCTING WOMAN'S POWER. Edited by Beth J. Seelig, M.D.; Robert A. Paul, Ph.D.; and Carol B. Levy, M.N.M.P.H. London/New York: Karnac, 2002. 142 pp.

Given that the topic of women and power is both important and timely, what is striking about this book is that it seems to offer little that is innovative for a psychoanalytic audience. This is not because the essays are not written by thoughtful and smart psychoanalysts—the roster is a talented group who have made many valuable contributions to psychoanalysis. Further, much of what is said in these essays is sound, so that the volume serves as a good basic primer for those outside the field interested in learning about psychoanalytic views of women and power.

I think the explanation for the sometimes Polonius-like tone of these essays may lie in the inherent limits in what psychoanalytic data can diagnose about societal issues. A consideration of some notorious historical blind spots in psychoanalytic theory making—in particular, our errors regarding female psychology and homosexuality—would suggest that we are much better situated to recognize the ways in which an individual is having difficulty making an alloplastic adaptation to the environment than to know from our particular psychoanalytic vantage point if the environment itself is diseased. As Grossman and Kaplan (1988) pointed out in

their brilliant analysis of the commentary on gender in Freud's thought,<sup>1</sup> our difficulties tend to arise when we confuse ourselves about the kinds of questions psychoanalytic data can properly answer. Freud's folly was not in being unable to determine what women (or men) want—or what they are like—but in ignoring or contradicting the insights of his own psychoanalytic discoveries about the fallacy of posing such questions to psychoanalysis, in his zeal to be able to answer them anyway. If there is a slight disappointment in the commonplace psychoanalytic conclusions that the essays in this volume offer, there is also a wisdom in their very limitations; where they occasionally founder, it is precisely because they overreach.

The volume is an outgrowth of an interdisciplinary conference on women and power that took place in Atlanta in 2000, jointly sponsored by a number of organizations, including the International Psychoanalytical Association, the American Psychoanalytic Association, and various divisions of Emory University. It is a selection of ten papers presented at the conference, which the editors have grouped according to the nominally organizing principles of "The Space," "The Navel," "The Womb," and "The Phallus." Within these categories, the authors examine ideas about, respectively, women's relation to their own power, children's relation to maternal power, the nature of female creativity, and men's relation to women's power.

In the first section, a set of essays by Dorothy Holmes, Nancy Chodorow, and Miriam Tasini deals essentially with the concepts of internal and external glass ceilings. In each of these papers, we hear, not surprisingly, that limitations on women's achievements are a result not only of external barriers to their advancement, but also of internal inhibitions and prohibitions in regard to aggres-

<sup>1</sup> Grossman, W. & Kaplan, D. (1988). Three commentaries on gender in Freud's thought: a prologue to the psychoanalytic theory of sexuality. In *Fantasy, Myth, and Reality: Essays in Honor of Jacob A. Arlow, M.D.*, ed. H. Blum, Y. Kramer, A. K. Richards & A. D. Richards. Madison, CT: Int. Univ. Press, pp. 339-370. For a further valuable discussion of these kinds of issues, see also Auchincloss, E. & Vaughan, S. (2001). Psychoanalysis and homosexuality: do we need a new theory? *J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn.*, 49:1157-1186.

sion, competition, and ambition. Case material is presented to support these conclusions. Certainly, this is vital, if politically delicate, information to convey to a nonpsychoanalytic audience. To pay attention to only external barriers in the workplace without addressing the ways in which, at a much deeper level, sexism and societal gender norms are internalized, leading women to limit themselves, supports too superficial an approach to programmatic change. But psychoanalytic readers are not likely to find in this material anything other than the ordinary path of analyzing unconscious conflicts, fantasies, and identifications. As Chodorow notes in her essay, "As I thought about my own patients, I could not think of one—male or female—in whom gender or sexuality did not contribute to an internal glass ceiling" (pp. 23-24).

Holmes's essay on glass ceilings provides an example of the potential pitfalls when the boundary is blurred between psychoanalytic and sociologic commentary on gender. She proposes that women are prone to "regression away from secondary-process domination" (p. 7) in the management of aggression, due to very early internalized prohibitions against its expression. To support this hypothesis, she turns to a study in the social science literature of a group of a thousand successful, professional women who were selected, amongst other criteria, for being happy in their work. In their responses to written questionnaires, these women described themselves as smart and talented, as well as having been taught to be "good little girls" and not to brag. Some of them then expressed surprise that they were considered successful enough to have been selected for the study. Some attributed their success to luck, as well as to intelligence and persistence.

Holmes cites these responses as evidence of "regression from secondary-process domination." An alternative hypothesis to the idea that this demonstrates regressive pathology is that it shows a highly adaptive ability to aggressively advance while disarming others with a nonthreatening appearance. If anything, the women's objective success and self-reported happiness would tend to support the latter hypothesis.

Holmes also cites a news report in which one woman driver shot and killed another woman driver, after they had been cutting each other off in heavy traffic, as evidence that

. . . mobilization of aggression created unstable and regressive states in two women . . . [because] women are taught to be wedded to the notion that aggression is inherently extremely dangerous and cannot be expressed by them, but, rather, that such expressions are the province of men. [p. 11]

Given that, epidemiologically, violent crime is indeed the “province of men,” her hypothesis seems a dubious fit for the data. Prohibitions against aggression create many unfortunate consequences for women, but statistics do not support the conclusion that violence perpetrated by women is one of them.

“The Navel,” a section on maternal power, similarly treads no surprising psychoanalytic ground. Joan Raphael-Leff’s poetic intersubjective account of the mother–infant relationship reviews such familiar issues as the immense power—and hence also dread—of the preoedipal mother, as well as the important reality of maternal ambivalence, which is heightened by contemporary culture’s “idealization of motherhood, yet denigration of mothering” (p. 53). She notes how societal arrangements that increase the isolation of mothers promote both increased power over the infant and increased maternal vulnerability to the dangers of ambivalence. She includes in her discussion the contributions of Winnicott and of theorists of attachment and mentalization, such as Stern and Fonagy.

Ellen Handler Spitz’s essay describes a 1988 film, *A World Apart*, set in the turmoil of 1960s apartheid South Africa, in which the normal psychological process of an early adolescent girl’s separation from her mother is both exacerbated and disrupted by the political events taking place around them. Spitz gives an astute analysis of the film and its poignant depiction of the troubled mother–daughter relationship. Perhaps tellingly, what is most engaging about the paper is Spitz’s always impressive ability to dis-

cern in both the form and content of a work of art its expression of familiar psychoanalytic themes; there is no attempt to delineate new ideas about the volume's topic, women and power.

This is also true of Elisabeth Young-Bruehl's paper, "Character and Creativity," in the following section of the book, "The Womb: Creative Power." Her hypothesis is in fact that there are several different creative character types that "are not specific to the two sexes, though they may have particular differences that are sex- or gender-specific" (p. 87). She suggests that different creative character types are a result of adolescent "character ideal" formation, in which a particular type of creative activity is idealized (based on an individual's character structure and developmental history): the strong, charismatic ego who harnesses the drives for creative purposes through sublimation; the artisanal character who "splits" the psyche to create through male and female parts a "child of the soul"; and the obsessional, ascetic character who creates through acts of purification and the stripping away to essentials. Thus, Young-Bruehl seems to argue against the idea of a specifically female type of creative power.

Where Elizabeth Lloyd Mayer argues for it, in her essay on "Women, Creativity, and Power," she leaves behind the field of psychoanalytic data and enters into a realm of far-ranging speculation. She proposes that we are facing a radical "paradigm shift" in our ways of apprehending the universe, "undercutting the centrality of boundaries and separation in defining the nature of the human mind" (p. 78). Women's creative contribution, she argues, will come through their special mode of "knowing" through "connectedness," on the one hand, and through their experience of "living life on the margins" (p. 79) and in isolation, on the other. She contrasts poets to psychoanalysts speaking about love, suggesting that the psychoanalytic emphasis is on boundedness and separation. This seems counter to Freud's numerous statements about the merging of boundaries that occurs in states of being in love, e.g.:

At the height of being in love, the boundary between ego and object threatens to melt away. Against all the evi-

dence of his senses, a man who is in love declares that “I” and “you” are one, and is prepared to behave as if it were a fact.<sup>2</sup>

Mayer then suggests that women’s creativity will be a new and unique kind of creativity based on their experience of being “marginalized,” which seems (1) to contradict her notion that women’s modes of thinking are specifically oriented toward connectedness, rather than being excluded or on the outside, and (2) to ignore the long-standing conception of the artist—who, as she notes, has historically more often been male than female—as an outsider figure, someone who looks at society with a different view. The artist’s position in society is hardly adequately characterized as part of the “male-centred mainstream” (p. 82). While that has perhaps been more the case at certain moments in history that very much celebrate and support the making of art (e.g., the Renaissance in Western Europe), it would hardly be a recognizable description of most artists’ relationship to the larger societal group, or certainly of most male artists’ view of themselves.

A final section of the book, entitled “The Phallus: Point/Counterpoint,” contains three essays that consider men’s relation to women’s power. (At least, that is the editors’ stated organizing schema, though the first of the essays does not really fit this mold.) In “Feminine Influence and Power,” Alcira Mariam Alizade puzzlingly sets the clock back to circa 1925 regarding psychoanalytic theory of female psychology, suggesting that the attainment of feminine power is to be had through an acceptance of castration, limitation, and servitude. She does not clarify why she views this aspect of feminine experience as some kind of bedrock (even if nominally turning it on its head), nor why she dispenses with any data regarding a woman’s developmental experience of her own genitals and what she *does* have. Further, Alizade seems to borrow more from popular fantasy than psychoanalytic data in her proposal that feminine power is, or will be (there is a somewhat messianic quality to this essay), a power devoid of aggression.

<sup>2</sup> Freud, S. (1930). Civilization and its discontents. *S. E.*, 21:66.



The remaining two essays, by Robert Glick ("Looking at Women: What Do Men See?") and Helen Meyers ("Men's View of Power in Women: A Woman's Perspective"), are richly descriptive—amongst the strongest in the volume—though again the territory is quite familiar. Glick reviews the ways in which men cope with their unconscious anxieties about the power of women through a defensive view of them as weak, vulnerable, and damaged. He cites Freud's errors in his theory making about female psychology as a prime example of such defensive male fantasies (influenced heavily, of course, by the social norms of the era). The power of the preoedipal mother to remove or restore the child's sense of self creates an awe and dread of female power. The male view of women as damaged, castrated beings defends against a view of them as potentially damaging.

Meyers makes a distinction between powerful women and women in power, noting that the former involves a particular internal integration of the self, whereas the latter is an externally observable situation involving women who may or may not experience themselves as strong. She outlines that a woman may get to a position of power through one of a variety of means (or, more commonly, through a combination of them): aggression and hostile competition, nurturance and support of others whose resulting gratitude and admiration lead to her increasing influence and power, and/or achievements and talents which in and of themselves result in recognition and power. However, Meyers postulates that men's reactions to women in power are more strongly influenced by their own internal fantasies of women than by the external realities of how women have attained their power. Here, she reviews various defensive constellations with which men may approach powerful women, e.g., as "bad" preoedipal mothers who must be avoided or attacked, defensively denigrated, or masochistically submitted to; as "good" preoedipal mothers who are looked to for love and caretaking, and who are identified with or envied; or as oedipal objects who are both exciting and forbidden.

This book should provide a useful psychoanalytic perspective for those outside the field who seek to deepen and broaden their conceptualization of the social issues surrounding gender and pow-

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er. Its limitations for the psychoanalytic reader underline the challenge for psychoanalysis when it addresses this kind of topic: to remain true to itself, as Polonius would admonish, yet to transcend his fate of delivering platitudes.

**JEAN ROIPHE (NEW YORK)**

THE INNER WORLD OF THE MOTHER. Edited by Dale Mendell, Ph.D., and Patsy Turrini, M.S.W. Madison, CT: Psychosocial Press, 2003. 346 pp.

This rich collection investigates a mother's inner world—her subjectivity—an area that has been surprisingly neglected by psychoanalysis. Editors Mendell and Turrini have assembled a superb collection that brings fresh perspectives to a topic deserving deeper exploration. In this very readable volume, sixteen thought-provoking contributions address the development of mothering capacities and its relation to female psychology, the psychic restructuring that can occur during the motherhood experience, the role of the internalized mother, special conditions of motherhood such as multiple births and adoption, pathologies in mothering, elements of clinical psychoanalytic work with mothers, and the relation between attachment research and psychoanalytic theories of mothering. New ideas and expanded insights about established observations are to be found here.

The opening chapter, by Blos, draws on clinical work and developmental theory to portray the process of becoming a mother. During pregnancy and the first eighteen months of an infant's life, the mother experiences a unique psychic plasticity and restructuring. This psychic restructuring is repeated with each new baby. Softening of a mother's boundaries, body imagery, and defenses allows internalized aspects of her maternal and paternal objects to surface, along with ancient id impulses. The plasticity can be threatening to a mother's psyche, producing defensive avoidance of ancient feelings, with a risk of isolation of affect and interference with empathic capacities and maternal attunement, so that disturbances may occur in the unfolding mother-infant relationship.

In Blos's three-generational model, central unresolved aspects of early relations with the mother's own mother come to the fore. Unresolved painful childhood experiences can lead to identification with the aggressor, repression of affects, and reenactments, with projection of these affects onto the baby. Blos provides rich clinical examples of such processes from family work and psychoanalysis. In an inverted transference, the analyst is placed in the position of the child and receives these projections. Blos's implication is that, if unanalyzed, these unresolved issues will be repeated in subsequent mothering experiences, and the woman will fail to grow during the process of mothering.

Mendell and Turrini provide a view of maternal lines of development. They explain how normative problems can be induced in women via derivatives of the preoedipal structuring of the maternal ego ideal. An initial symbiotic, dual unity fantasy, as well as an omnipotent, perfective, symbiotic fantasy of effortless mothering, and other events in the second and third years of the child's life—such as the emergence of separateness and gender identity—all contribute to preoedipal components of the maternal ego ideal. These early maternal structures include aspects of the developing self and sense of gender identity in relation to a fantasized child. Persisting perfective ego ideals may later lead to depression and a sense of failure, as realistic difficulties in mothering are confronted. Anal restrictions can lead to identification with the aggressor as an aspect of motherhood, but fantasies related to the fecal mass and the sense of a full interior can also serve to reinforce a sense of body cohesion and integrity, sustaining a woman through menstruation, pregnancy, and childbirth.

Early preoedipal components of the ego ideal are projected into cultural symbols or myths of motherhood, with tendencies toward depression stemming from the universal inability to maintain nonaggressive idealized standards. Many dynamics strain against the myth of the ease of motherhood. Early libidinal needs to have mother as part of the self (dual unity fantasies) catalyze later organized patterns of caretaking, where the original functions of the object representation (parent) are taken over in the self rep-

resentation, and thus are substantially experience derived through maternal identifications.

The editors opine that, as part of the mothering experience, children normatively become women's selfobjects, self-completers, and narcissistic enhancers. Yearnings for oneness with mother can be satisfied in part by the internalization and elaboration of actual motherhood. This need to complete the self through the child is seen here as an aspect of normal adult secondary narcissism, yet one that creates normative painful problems. Attachment is thus always accompanied by some degree of anxiety and pain in relation to separateness. Mothers repeatedly adapt to the reality of loss, to the difference between a fantasized child and reality, and to environmental vicissitudes that will not allow longed-for repetitions of the past. Mendell and Turrini argue that the adult woman unconsciously expects her child to provide completion for her longings and dual unity fantasies, while her children become a central part of her inner world. The adult woman chooses her child as a maintenance object and a completer of the self, so sameness is desired, although it is also noted that healthy parents can appreciate their child's uniqueness.

As a reader, I felt that these intriguing hypotheses called out for further elaboration and investigation. When is motherhood a developmental process rather than a repetition of frustrating experiences? My own view is that motherhood is a developmental opportunity, rather than an inevitable phase of growth. How can children become important parts of a woman's inner life, while still being perceived as unique individuals? I consider a mother's ability to balance longed-for fantasies of a child with the reality of her actual child as an essential ingredient in mothering. Each mother needs both an ongoing image of her child's potential and a respect for and delight in the child's growing individuality. This process seems to involve an ability to accept yearnings, but also to face reality and to mourn disappointments.

We need to understand more about the developmental roots and qualities in the mother's psyche that shape these capacities or derail them. To what extent is the healthy parent psychically de-

pendent on her child, and is such parental dependence growth inducing or traumatizing for the child? Will mother-child pathologies develop especially in a culture that devalues women or mothering, or that stunts women's other opportunities for self-development? Is it true that empathic attunement and sensitivity to new life are inevitably linked to reaction formations and inhibited aggression?

*The Inner World of the Mother* provokes thought about these important, complex issues and elaborates some of these questions. Blos argues that the intrapsychic process of mothering joins the actuality of the baby at its birth, when a fantasy baby is reconciled with the real infant. Others represented in this volume feel that this process is lifelong and without reconciliation. Lax writes that the vicissitudes of mother's interaction with her "fantasy child" ebb and flow, and last a lifetime; she views the wish to have a child as stemming from unconscious responses to pressures that define a woman's role, as well as a fantasied opportunity to play out mother-child roles in idealized form. Creation and enjoyment of a fantasy child during pregnancy provides a specific narcissistic creation or an expanding dual self representation. Lax believes that mother's investment in her child depends in large measure on the extent to which the infant unconsciously embodies her fantasy child and is an extension of herself. She describes several women who were highly ambivalent and troubled as mothers when the fit between their fantasy child and their real baby was diminished.

But in reading this account, I wondered whether these women's failures to adapt and relinquish their desperate need for the fantasy child reflected specific narcissistic issues for them as individuals, rather than a universal process. Their need to complete the self through the child seemed to be inflexible and pathological, omitting the normal mourning and delight in discovering newness that occurs throughout the life cycle. Kupferman, writing about adoptive mothers, suggests that women who have been able to come to terms with the loss of the opportunity to have biological children were more likely to respect a child for who he or she was, rather than needing a child to match up with a perfect, pro-

jected narcissistic image. These adopted children were then observed to be "persons of vitality" with "free access to authentic selves" (p. 241).

Mendell further expands various ideas about a mother's internal relationship with her child in her chapter, which explores three maternal fantasies that she finds are typical and well-nigh universal: the cornucopia fantasy, the fantasy of parthenogenesis, and the one-body fantasy. These fantasies originate in the omnipotent-perfective fantasies of infancy. Mendell sees these fantasies as always alive on the unconscious level and as typical of the gender-dichotomous development of girls, reflecting a basic core of fantasies in the developmental lines of a maternal and feminine self. In adulthood, they are modifiable but not replaceable, and continue to be affected by the impact of ongoing mothering.

Mendell feels that the flexible ego structure and attunement typical in mothering allow normative access to these primitive fantasies, which can contribute to creativity, pleasure, and transformation in mothering activity throughout the life cycle. Her examples include a panoply of pleasure and pain: erotic fantasies of nursing a man back to health, feelings of bountifulness in sexual experiences while nursing, anger and ambivalence toward separating adolescents, ecstatic feelings of symbiotic merging in a grandmother with a grandchild, and angry wishes to discard a difficult child. The implication here is that intense affects can be withstood and transformed by those with good ego structure.

Parens's article describes his observations of early mother-child relations, with an emphasis on both intense feelings and the sense of evolution of the self that are evoked by new motherhood. He notes that many mothers are talented at rearing children who are different from one another and from themselves. He feels that this capacity for differential parental reactivity stems first from the transient, adaptive, increased flexibility in ego functioning in early mothering that has been noted by Blos. Parens's studies have found that an adaptive change in functioning can extend for a longer period and can continue to evolve, to include ego growth and permanently maintained characterological change. A fluid

responsivity and accommodation to the infant, with reciprocity on the infant's part, reflects developmental growth in those women who had been endowed with initial sufficient maturity. Parens's observations fit with my view of the necessity for mourning and adaptation throughout motherhood.

Parens also explores the nature of unconditional love. He feels that this love is unique and can develop especially in parents toward their children. It grows out of parents' emotional investment in children experienced as "our own" (adoptive or biological), and contains both affectional and sensual currents. Thus, he emphasizes the sense of secure belonging and possession of a child in unconditional love, rather than the child's providing opportunities for narcissistic reflection or completion.

Balsam highlights the impact of the internalized mother in experiences of early motherhood and later stages of mothering. Her evocative paper addresses specifics of clinical work with mothers. In the postpartum and nursing stage, preoccupation with the self is minimal, and the baby may function as a transitional object (me/not me) between a therapist and patient. The analytic transference during this period is to a wished-for, benign presence, so the analyst should work "alongside . . . of the patient's defenses" (p. 73) and in the here and now. Babies are often brought in to the therapist or analyst for admiration, as well as to reveal elements of conflict, including conflicted unconscious maternal identifications. The analyst can allow the unfolding of the relationship with the internalized maternal figure and its projections to become gradually available. Balsam presents vivid clinical illustrations of the usefulness of bringing the internalized mother to light. This exploration is applied to women at different stages of mothering and adulthood.

Several papers in this volume illuminate pathologies of mothering. Hollman describes the effects of maternal loss in early adulthood on later experiences of maternity. Edward discusses her work with mothers' feelings of hate toward children. Weinstein describes two women with conscious infanticidal wishes, who had differing fantasies and pathologies, but were both depressed, felt



unnurtured, and could not cathect their actual babies. Oliner explores the inner worlds of women who think of themselves as “bad” mothers and tend to relinquish their child.

Turrini’s chapter, “The Capacity to Cure: Inevitable Failure, Guilt, and Symptoms,” expands her ideas about preoedipal origins of maternity, and emphasizes identifications with perceived maternal capacities for transformation, cure, and relief of pain. Such fantasies extend symbiotic perfective fantasies, and, when pathological, can lead to guilt, depression, and self-punishment for failing to have prevented disturbances in one’s own mother, who remains excessively idealized.

An outstanding contribution within *The Inner World of the Mother* is the comprehensive chapter on the representational world of the mother in attachment theory and psychoanalytic theory, by Diamond and Kotov. These authors provide an overview of attachment research, delineating attachment theory’s conceptualizations of caregiving, a mother’s representational world, and a mother’s internal states in relation to her representation of the mother–child relationship. Research reveals that caregiving representations develop before the infant’s birth, emphasizing a developmental element in the mother’s subjective experience and suggesting that mothering is a separate, autonomous motivational system with transformative power during the lived experience of motherhood.

This attachment research model is contrasted and compared with models of reciprocal experiences of parent and child in psychoanalytic research. The psychoanalytic models stress a dynamic unconscious and ways in which actual mothering helps women to resolve ambivalence about their own mothers and consolidate maternal identifications. Diamond and Kotov critique both the attachment and psychoanalytic models, and suggest areas of concordance as well as areas in need of further exploration. They propose that the caregiving system should be conceived of as having multilevel and complex constellations within a mother’s inner world, allowing for influences of triangular oedipal relations, as well as unconscious sexual and aggressive impulses, with their multiple projections and introjections requiring integration.

Another intriguing chapter, by Ainslie, describes the experience of mothering of twins. Multiple births are now more common owing to use of fertility treatments, and women who are so determined to be mothers can be especially vulnerable to the inevitable imperfections in the mothering task. The mothering of multiples particularly stimulates awareness of the contrast between idealized versions of mothering and actual realities. I thought Ainslie leaned a bit to the pessimistic side in vividly describing difficulties in mothering twins.

A chapter coauthored by the book's editors summarizes some recent research projects on maternal subjectivity. Yet another valuable contribution, by Bernardez, illuminates the requirement of a good enough environment for good enough mothering; Bernardez notes that universal unconscious fantasies tend to portray an omnipotent, magical mother, selfless and devoid of aggression, while another, split-off view of mothers in real life devalues them as imperfect or dangerous. In our society, idealized extolling of mothering is frequently accompanied by actual hostility toward mothers, financial penalties, and lack of social supports. Gender polarities further split caretaking and instrumental roles, rather than helping mothers to integrate these, so that women are expected to be sensitive to others' needs while ignoring their own. Fathers can be negatively affected by cultural mythologies, but can also provide important sources of support to women (although the role of fathers and the effects of the couple's relationship on maternal subjectivity are not stressed in this volume).

The chapter by Bernardez, like others here, suggests the crucial importance of attending to myths of motherhood, personal and theoretical. I would add that our theorizing of the inner maternal experience may be permeated as well by idealizations, infantile projections, and phobic fears. Perhaps such residual fantasies about mothers may play a role in the relative scarcity of psychoanalytic writings about maternal subjectivity pre-dating this volume. Clinical observation of actual mothers, including those with young infants, reveals that they are not as immersed and blissfully preoccupied with their infants as one might dream. While a

state comparable to blissful immersion indeed may be present for many moments in a mother's psyche, her fluid responsivity and accommodation to her infant are always imperfect. Actual good mothers are aware in other moments of their own physical and emotional needs, the evocation of old objects and fantasies, the real new experiences of other family members, and needs to attend to practicalities of life, such as groceries, bills, visitors, and the relationship between the parents. Actual good mothers are also aware of wishes to preserve nonmaternal aspects of the self.

It is a child's magical wish that a perfect mother be totally attentive and without her own agency. Real mothers may be more or less responsive and empathic, while preserving a differentiated identity and having other needs. This volume opens the enterprise of exploring mothers' subjectivity, including the possibility that mothers tend to feel shame about having minds of their own! More work on the inner world of the mother would be most welcome.

**ELEANOR SCHUKER (NEW YORK)**

RETHINKING PSYCHOANALYSIS AND THE HOMOSEXUALITIES (a volume of *The Annual of Psychoanalysis*). Edited by Jerome A. Winer, M.D., and James William Anderson, Ph.D. Hillsdale, NJ: The Analytic Press, 2002. 313 pp.

Few areas of psychoanalytic inquiry have undergone such far-reaching revision as the theorization of homosexuality and the treatment of lesbian and gay patients. *Rethinking Psychoanalysis and the Homosexualities* provides a critical and engaging discussion of this revision, with contributions by several leading scholars of sexuality and homosexuality. I approached this book as one would anticipate attending a state-of-the-art conference and, as hoped for,

encountered thoughtful critiques, illuminating and candidly presented cases, and several unresolved tensions that make this volume a valuable and challenging read.

The overriding theme of this book is how psychoanalysis, an enterprise rooted in humanist traditions, detoured so profoundly from this underpinning by viewing homosexuality as inherently pathological, thereby compounding the problems for which lesbians and gay men sought treatment, including the stigmatization of homosexuality. Contributors to this volume discuss “what went wrong” and, as importantly, what constitutes promise in the evolution of psychoanalytic thought on homosexuality. Regarding the former, several chapters present cogent reviews of error in psychoanalytic thought and scholarly method. Roy Schafer discusses the bias inherent in Freud’s emphasis on evolutionary biology in his formulation of normative psychosexual development, Richard Friedman describes the hazards of ignoring extra-analytic sexuality research from the biological sciences, and Jack Drescher, Bertram Cohler, and Martha Nussbaum review the neglected necessity of considering time and place as determinants of how we understand sexuality and homosexuality.

I found chapters describing the utility of advances in analytic theory as applied to homosexuality particularly useful. Psychoanalytic approaches grounded in self psychology, intersubjectivity, and an awareness of how social-historical context shapes case formulation and the patient–therapist relationship are well suited for work with homosexual patients, given the pervasive experience of feeling different, the prominence of shameful feelings, and the resultant risk of fragmentation of the self in the developmental histories of many lesbians and gay men. Marian Tolpin, for example, argues for the importance of recognizing transferences of health in which patients seek to find their own kind of selfhood, i.e., “forward edge transferences” as opposed to “trailing edge transferences” that express pathological modes of relating. As Tolpin writes,

Blind spots due to theory place unintended iatrogenic limits on therapeutic action. When we fail to see that there are strivings (“tendrils”) for recognition, strengthening, and

aliqueness experiences and fail to facilitate their emergence (primarily by recognizing and interpreting them as such), we contribute to crushing them again and crowding them out. [p. 121]

One distortion that has contributed to the difficulty analysts have had in distinguishing between healthy and pathological transferences in work with homosexual patients is the conflation of sexualization with sexual orientation, as discussed in this volume by Dennis Shelby, Paul Lynch, and Ralph Roughton. While sexualization often arises from the disavowal of tender longings as can occur as a result of the stigmatization of homosexuality, it is not intrinsic or limited to homosexuality. Sexualization, moreover, has a variety of meanings along a spectrum of health and pathology. As Roughton and Shelby point out, this observation has been applied belatedly to homosexual patients.

As an aside, one of the more intriguing commentaries in this volume is Shelby's argument that the advent of the Internet has created a new universe of electronic sexual reveries and possibilities for behavioral enactments. Gay men may be more celebrated users of technology for these purposes, but clinicians working with adolescents and many adults find themselves questioning how best to understand the various uses of the Internet by patients—for example, frequent electronic searching for partners or the assumption of fictional identities in chat rooms. When is such use healthy or unhealthy, developmentally appropriate or inappropriate, constructive or destructive? Shelby's comments remind us that many questions raised in a discussion of homosexuality should be considered part of a larger enterprise to rethink sexuality, more broadly defined; I think all the contributors to this volume would agree with this premise.

Case material in this book serves as a springboard for discussion of how psychoanalysis has evolved from erroneous assumptions of pathology to more enlightened treatment of lesbian and gay patients. In one such case, Roughton candidly examines how earlier views of homosexuality and his own life circumstances deflected the course of analysis with a gay male patient; if given a

chance to reanalyze this patient today, Roughton discusses how he would emphasize the self needs of his patient and avoid insinuations that his homosexual feelings represented only pathological or restorative use of sexuality. Sidney Phillips, Lynch, Shelby, and Karen Martin present sensitively written cases that illustrate the potential for increased empathic understanding, on the one hand, and patient-therapist collusion, on the other, when patients and therapists are no longer prejudged because of their sexual orientation and assumptions or actuality of shared experience characterize the therapeutic dyad.

These case histories raise fundamental questions about how well individual cases can support generalizations about developmental theory and, conversely, how well the latter can be applied to an understanding of the former. While not limited to the topic of homosexuality, this quandary has heightened present resonance because of the past misapplication of clinical inference and theory to the lives of lesbians and gay men. This tension is revealed in an interesting exchange between Martin, case presenter, and Beverly Keefer, discussant. Keefer calls for more explicit consideration of normative developmental issues in the life of Martin's lesbian patient; Martin responds by saying that many of Keefer's points go without saying, and sticks to a more patient-specific review of early object and transferential relations in the analysis.

What, then, is the proper interpretive lens for understanding and discussing lesbian and gay lives? How much emphasis should be placed on idiosyncrasies of life experience and psychodynamics versus contextual factors that shape the meaning of being different as experienced by prehomosexual children and adolescents?

Keefer and Kelly Reene address these questions by exploring the effect of sexual orientation on adolescent identity formation and suggesting a variety of conceptual frames. They ask, for example, whether developing an adolescent lesbian identity is best understood as an elongation of identity consolidation, a potential prompt of identity diffusion, or a significantly different developmental pathway. This question, of course, pertains to the understanding of developmental issues in gay men as well.

I suspect that some of the inconsistency in this volume's varying emphases on early object relations versus the social context of childhood and adolescence reflects the field's ongoing uncertainty about how to best integrate intrapsychic, interpersonal, and sociocultural perspectives that shape our understanding of individual development. In the story of homosexual lives, all three perspectives make important contributions.

Given the variability inherent in individual development in heterosexual contexts, adding a consideration of homosexual identity makes developmental formulation and theorization arguably more complex. We know little about individual variability, for instance, in the meaning, effect, and modulation of stigmatization of same-gender longings experienced by prehomosexual youth, or the centrality and salience with which lesbians and gay men imbue their homosexuality identity. Perhaps the editors of the present volume had such variability in mind in choosing the term *homosexualities*, not homosexuality, in the book's title.

Selected case histories such as those presented in a book like this can obscure points of generalization about development and psychodynamics as much as clarify them. I found myself wondering about the inclusion of several cases illustrating sexualization as a clinical issue among gay male patients; what are other important life concerns and developmental issues in the lives of gay men whom we treat? As Schafer mentions, the rich individualization of clinical experience can operate at cross-purposes with efforts to generalize about clinical phenomena.

This rich individualization, however, suggests an additional role for psychoanalysis in the study of homosexual lives. Psychoanalysis can play a valuable role as a qualitative component of scholarly study that examines patterns of development in lesbians and gay men. For instance, given the near ubiquity of stigmatization of homosexual identity, how can we better understand the interactive effects of childhood disposition and gender-role attributes, early object relations, and the social and often stigmatizing context of preadult life experience in shaping adult capacities for intimacy, sexuality, and other markers of psychological



health, such as the capacity for engagement and self-transcendence? Analysis, of course, has traditionally concerned itself with the problematic, but its methods and underlying curiosity could also be deployed to characterize developmental pathways for lesbians and gay men who live psychologically robust lives.

*Rethinking Psychoanalysis and the Homosexualities* appropriately suggests a work in progress as psychoanalysis reevaluates its contribution to the well-being of lesbians and gay men. Readers interested in this cause will find this an honest and thoughtful book, at times internally contradictory, but always in the spirit of critical inquiry marshaled to enliven our work and better our patients' lives. There is much to read in this volume that is invigorating. As Cohler writes, the benefits of the psychoanalytic study of homosexual lives are twofold: not only will our understanding of homosexuality improve, but so will our understanding of the psychoanalytic situation and our appreciation of analytic perspectives on the study of lived experience across the course of life. This is an enterprise that is always worth revisiting.

**ROBERT M. KERTZNER (SAN FRANCISCO, CA)**

HATING IN THE FIRST PERSON PLURAL: PSYCHOANALYTIC  
ESSAYS ON RACISM, HOMOPHOBIA, MISOGYNY, AND  
TERRORISM. Edited by Donald Moss, M.D. New York: Other  
Press, 2003. 326 pp.

This impressive and moving collection of thirteen essays provides a conceptual framework for bridging the psychological and social dimensions of prejudice in its varied forms. The volume's three contributions written by the editor, Donald Moss, have been reprinted from other sources, as have been four others by different authors. The volume is divided into the four sections outlined in its title: "On Racism," "On Homophobia," "On Misogyny," and "On Terrorism." Moss's objective, clearly outlined in his preface, is to apply psychoanalytic understanding to our contemporary culture's "clinical and social emergencies" (p. xiv). His hope, which some might call visionary, is to move psychoanalytic thinking out from

its marginal status and thereby effect social change. Certainly, a place to start is for Moss to raise some challenges within his own profession.

In his introduction, Moss explains the psychoanalytic thesis that links these topics and is alluded to in the title of this volume. Recounting his childhood struggle to integrate the horrors of Nazi oppression, Moss repeatedly watched newsreels of the liberation of the death camps, experiencing a sense of horror and fascination. This painful awareness of both identification and "desire," recognized as such only in retrospect, provides the starting point for his reflections on individual defensive elaborations resulting in collective hatred. He argues that for the psychoanalyst to say anything meaningful about hatred in its many forms, he or she must first acknowledge not only personal identifications with the victim, but also identifications with the aggressor, as well as struggles to disidentify. Furthermore, the analyst has an ethical imperative to do so. We are uniquely trained to understand this kind of complex psychological process and can therefore contribute to a deepened understanding of it.

Adrienne Harris, a contributor to the volume, repeats the question that was posed by Moss to each of them: "Does hatred live as an internalized 'we,' so that, installed as an aspect of the super-ego, this hatred takes its force from the external culture, and in that way desire is policed?" (p. 251). She wonders whether such a view diminishes the significance of intrapsychic dynamics, and questions whether psychoanalytic understanding can or should be used to effect social change. All the contributors to this volume grapple with these issues in their own ways, bridging meanings derived from the consulting room, literature, history, and the contemporary political and social milieu.

As an analyst practicing in the contemporary milieu, I am familiar with analytic discourse about gender and sexuality, and have grappled with such issues daily in my work with patients. The complex relationship between matters of individual psychology and cultural imperatives, resulting in pathological identifications, superego pressures, and defensive externalizations, presents itself in

the analyses of most patients to a greater or lesser extent. Nonetheless, it is somewhat shocking to acknowledge my own very limited experience with analyzing matters related to race and my ignorance of the relevant psychoanalytic literature. I suspect this is true for many analysts practicing today in the United States.

A search of a psychoanalytic database (Psychoanalytic Electronic Publishing's CD-ROM, version 4) for papers on "black white racism" yielded approximately sixty papers written over a period of about forty-five years. Further, unsystematic investigation yielded several additional and quite interesting references dating back some years, including Kardiner and Ovesey's (1964) *The Mark of Oppression: A Psychological Study of the American Negro*,<sup>1</sup> and Bird's (1957) "A Consideration of the Etiology of Prejudice."<sup>2</sup>

Thus, my sense of the paucity of such contributions to mainstream psychoanalytic literature was confirmed. Despite the field's large representation of politically liberal, intellectually aware members, it remains an overwhelmingly white profession. While our collective consciousness has been raised about gender issues, and rampant antihomosexual prejudice has been somewhat diminished, racial ignorance and/or prejudice persists. For all these reasons, I found the first section on racism the most compelling and informative portion of this volume.

Maurice Apprey, in a chapter entitled "Repairing History: Reworking Transgenerational Trauma," opens the section "On Racism," followed by a complementary piece by Alan Bass, who draws upon and elaborates Apprey's ideas. Apprey's central concept of *transgenerational haunting* (p. 9) provides a historical/intrapsychic model for the transmission of trauma from one generation to the next in the form of internalized aggression. In Apprey's view, deformations and ruptures of cultural memory produced by institutionalized prejudice create pathological forms of unconscious remembering that occur at the level of individuals and groups. While such remembering may occur in familiar forms of ego and superego identifications, such as identification with the aggressor,

<sup>1</sup> Cleveland, OH: World Publishing.

<sup>2</sup> *J. Amer. Psychoanal. Assn.*, 5:490-513.

more insidious forms of transmission may also occur. These may be expressed in behavioral forms that Apprey classifies in three phenomenological groups of varying levels of pathology. I found it difficult to distinguish the two more pathological forms, *syncretic* and *amovable*, which both involve condensations of aggressively infiltrated, internalized representations of victim and aggressor, resulting in self-attack and attacks upon the object. The higher-level symbolic form represents some capacity for adaptive compromise formation that is not so heavily infiltrated with aggression.

Apprey covers an enormous amount of ground in this paper, necessarily resulting in a rather schematic set of propositions. Included are recommendations for therapeutic and ameliorative interventions, aimed at both the individual and the community. Apprey describes his contribution as a union of drive theory and transgenerational object relations theory in which he radically modifies a classical view of the former. I think his contribution is substantial not because he radically modifies drive theory, but because he is able to apply classical psychoanalytic conceptualizations to a complex historical and social domain in a meaningful way.

Alan Bass acknowledges his debt to Apprey in "Historical and Unconscious Trauma: Racism and Psychoanalysis." He directs our attention to the relatively segregated institution of psychoanalysis, and notes its relative silence on racial matters. He is dismayed in retrospect by his own failure to fully recognize the significance of intergenerational transmission of trauma in the psychology of a young black patient, while he is amply cognizant of similar issues in his treatment of a second-generation Holocaust survivor. Bass locates Apprey's ideas about trauma in the context of those of other analysts who have written about trauma, beginning with Freud, but especially those who have focused on the unconscious communication aspect of its intergenerational transmission. Bass cites Laplanche, Torok, and Abraham, who emphasize the registration of trauma in one generation and the "deferred" effect in the next. What are registered are not only the traumatizer's conscious actions, but also his or her unconscious fantasies, which

then serve as the stimulus for defensively transformed versions of such actions that are urgently enacted in subsequent generations.

Two additional essays in this section are different from others in this volume. Both fascinating, their arguments are put forth as psychoanalytic critiques of literary works, best appreciated by the initiated reader. In “‘The Derived Life of Fiction’: Race, Childhood, and Culture,” David Marriot explores the complex relationship between fiction and action through discussion of the works of Richard Wright and Fredric Wertham, a psychiatrist contemporary and friend of Wright’s. Wertham’s works fascinated Wright because he wrote about the relationship between culture and juvenile violence, focusing on the dynamics of matricide. This, too, is the central dynamic in Wright’s male protagonists, a dynamic so powerful that Marriot identifies the black mother as the symbol of racist culture in America. Marriot’s paper and E. Victor Wolfenstein’s, which follows, both depict the powerful intertwining of racism and misogyny, a point critical to the aim of this volume. In fact, a rereading of these papers after having read those on misogyny adds to a deeper appreciation of all.

Wolfenstein (“Race, Rage, and Oedipus in Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man*”) examines its subject book from a radical political and psychoanalytic perspective, focusing on the relationship of race, aggression, and oedipal conflict in the character of “IM.” Wolfenstein traces the evolution of IM’s painful passage through recurring oedipal dilemmas, made horrendous by the social context in which they occurred. He concludes that IM, unlike Malcolm X, fails to fully work through these dilemmas (a point that might be challenged with regard to Malcolm X). While the dynamic that Wolfenstein focuses on is phallogentric, unlike that of Marriot, he makes the same point that the dynamics of racial prejudice are intertwined with those of homophobia and misogyny.

The second section of Moss’s book, “On Homophobia,” includes four papers that seek to delineate in a more precise way the complex determinants of homophobia. Ken Corbett (“Faggot = Loser”) explores homophobia’s early developmental determinants during the phallic narcissistic phase through the presentation

of his clinical work with a six-year-old boy. He expands the classical view of male development, which focuses on castration anxiety and phallic narcissism, in order to conceptualize the intense aggression of the phallic narcissistic phase as a defense against fears of smallness and losing, which together describe a "central boyhood trope" (p. 120). In his view, the salient dilemma for the boy is not genital difference, but genital inadequacy in the sense of generational difference. He particularly cautions against a "boys-will-be-boys" attitude toward the aggressive bravado of young boys, as it may well result in parental abandonment and neglect. The male child's reliance on phallic illusion is then further buttressed by the absence of developmentally expectable oedipal struggles and mentalization processes.

Corbett describes the moment when he becomes a "faggot," an expletive hurled at him by his child patient after losing to Corbett at a board game. While at that point it represented a projection of the patient's humiliation and rage over losing the game, Corbett describes how, in later development, homosexuality may come to represent the denigrated and warded-off representation of lost masculinity and power. When homosexual anxiety is particularly intense, the needs for narcissistic aggrandizement and phobic solutions come to the fore. Clearly, such solutions are reinforced by cultural stereotypes, but Corbett argues that they are also reinforced by the inadequacies of our psychoanalytic understanding of masculine development.

An interesting counterpoint to Corbett's essay is that of Kenneth Lewes ("Homosexuality, Homophobia, and Gay-Friendly Psychoanalysis"), who decries the shifts in psychoanalytic theory that emphasize relational issues and attachment at the expense of classical theory and its focus on sex and aggression. This has particular significance in the analyses of adult male homosexuals, where phallic issues and castration anxiety are central. Yet in consonance with current trends, phallic strivings may be inaccurately interpreted as defenses against passive strivings, resulting in depression, shame, and stalemated, dependent transferences. Lewes attributes this shift in part to the tragic death from AIDS of a gen-

eration of gay male analysts who would have maintained a focus on the normative and salutary significance of phallic issues.

While I find it difficult to attribute such a profound shift of theoretical emphasis to the absence of one relatively circumscribed segment of the analytic community (particularly one that was largely closeted), I think Lewes makes a compelling point with broader clinical significance. His observation about the shift in content of clinical interpretation is relevant to work with many patients. Corbett is careful to offer his views as an augmentation, rather than as a replacement, of classical theory, but I do think that the two authors might differ in their emphases.

Lewes raises another interesting point: Although the psychoanalytic community has to some extent awakened from a previous stance of zealous homophobia, there has been no attempt to understand or explain the determinants of the former attitude. He posits a complex relationship between psychoanalysis and homosexuality, the essence of which involves the inadequate resolution of conflicts about the passive stance of analytic work, seeing this as linked to conflicts about homosexuality. Here, ironically, Lewes may himself be conceptualizing the use of phallic defenses against passive dependent wishes.

Moss's essay ("Internalized Homophobia in Men: Wanting in the First Person Singular, Hating in the First Person Plural") elaborates the dynamics of internalized homophobia captured in the title of the book. Rather than restricting its usage to the conventional notion of the homosexual, who experiences persistent shame and self-loathing because of his object choice, Moss argues to expand its meaning. Viewing internalized homophobia as a symptom allows for a fuller examination of its unconscious determinants in any individual. The threat of forbidden desire is transformed into a collective hatred and repudiation of homosexuality. Object love becomes object hate through a group affiliation that promises safety and power against the threat of homosexual longings, while simultaneously satisfying homoerotic longings. The third person plural "we" of internalized homophobia creates a community of men of like minds and bodies. Moss dem-



onstrates a compelling link between individual dynamics and group psychology, a valuable contribution offered by this volume and one less common in psychoanalytic writings.

Elisabeth Young-Bruehl ("Homophobia: A Diagnostic and Political Manual") provides a cogent description of the stages in a movement for liberation and equality, focusing particularly on the fight for gay rights. For example, she explains why identity assertion is critical at one stage, but later serves to maintain prejudices. In a second segment of the paper, which does not seem fully integrated with the first, she argues that not all prejudices are alike. She conceptualizes prejudices as social mechanisms of defense that serve different motivations in different individuals. While recognizing the impact of social and economic factors, she explains, somewhat reductionistically, how the dynamics of each character type support certain prejudices more intensely, while homophobia is syntonic for all. This supports the case for a psychoanalytic approach to fighting prejudice, since a cognitive-behavioral approach will ultimately fail to address the purposes these prejudices serve. It is not clear to me how Young-Bruehl proposes that this be accomplished, however.

Adrienne Harris and Lynne Zeavin, in the section "On Misogyny," separately examine the dynamic intrapsychic sources of misogyny in the child's preoedipal relationship to the mother. Zeavin ("As Useless as Tits on a Bull? Psychoanalytic Reflections on Misogyny") focuses her attention on internalized misogyny, the conflicted state in some women of unconscious self-hatred about femaleness. She leans heavily upon Torok's formulations about the ambivalent object tie of the young girl to her mother, which she further elaborates with rich clinical narratives of her own work with several patients. She describes the early developmental challenge of separation, a separation necessarily fueled by hatred, which then structures feelings about oneself as a woman and about other women. Like Torok, Zeavin views penis envy as a symptomatic solution to the dilemma of maintaining a tie to the mother in the face of envy of maternal power, disappointment, resentment, and, ultimately, unsatisfied need. Ambition, desire,

and sexuality must be sacrificed by the daughter to a default experience of acknowledged, shared defect with her mother. The state of longing and being without becomes forged with representations of femininity.

While Zeavin clearly acknowledges the cultural buttressing of such views, one is left with the sense of dynamic imperative. Harris's developmental schema ("Misogyny: Hatred at Close Range") does not differ substantially from Zeavin's, but Harris is particularly interested in the persistent tension between the intrapsychic and social dimensions of misogyny. Misogyny serves as a regulatory force, internalized in the structure of the superego and maintained by "material historical conditions and social practices" (p. 259). Harris underlines that, while misogyny arises from archaic primary process roots, its persistence relies on a failure of secondary process to modulate its subsequent evolution. She distinguishes the specific determinants of misogyny in male and female development, yet makes the point that it is a more personal hatred than that of other prejudices, since we all have mothers. She examines both the anxieties and hostilities generated by the challenge of separation/individuation, and also the defensive responses to love and excitement stimulated by the child's experience of the mother's sexuality and desire.

Harris cautions that psychoanalytic theory, like society, may promote misogyny through a persistent, unexamined indictment of the dangerous preoedipal mother. This image may be present in our theories of development, as well as in our depreciation and anxieties about female capacities. In addition, the analyst may countertransferentially neglect to analyze those split maternal transferences in which the analyst is the recipient of the positive valence.

The final section of the book, "On Terrorism," while timely and thematically apt, is the only one I found disappointing. Psychoanalytic theorizing is built upon a foundation of accumulated clinical knowledge, necessarily lacking in relationship to this topic. Both David Lichtenstein ("The Appearance of the *Other* in the At-

tacks on September 11") and Moss ("Does it Matter What the Terrorists Meant?") make the point that the challenge for analysts is to maintain an analytic way of thinking, even in the face of behavior that seems inhuman. Only by accepting the actions of terrorists as human will it be possible to provide some deeper understanding of these actions. An act of terror requires disidentification, as does a response to terror that licenses any destructiveness as acceptable. A psychoanalytic way of thinking would involve an attempt at identification with the aim and intent of the terrorist, both to uncover distortions and to ensure that fair punishment will occur. Such a goal strikes this reader as rather utopian.

The focus of Ruth Stein's essay ("Evil as Love and as Liberation: The Mind of a Suicidal Religious Terrorist") is less social/political than psychodynamic, as the author attempts to reconstruct the psychological experience of the 9/11 terrorists. Her data consists of excerpts from a letter written by Mohammed Atta to the terrorist participants on the eve of their action. She notes the absence of references to hatred or destruction, as well as the tone of loving reverence to a powerful god. Stein proposes that such a state of transcendent religious ecstasy, when linked with murder and suicide, involves an external solution to an internal psychological dilemma in which self-hatred, envy, and failure are transformed into total, loving submission to a cruel and feared father. This represents a paternal regression, according to Stein, characterized by different imagery and motivation than a maternal regression. Unfortunately, as Stein's supportive data is limited to Atta's letter, I believe that most psychoanalytic readers will regard her formulations as highly speculative.

This volume is a valuable and unique contribution to the psychoanalytic literature, covering its topic with complexity and depth. I found it stimulating in my clinical work, as well as in thinking about the broader scope of the issues presented. A final chapter written by the editor would have benefited this reader by providing an integrative overview and some summary conclusions.

**ESLEE SAMBERG (NEW YORK)**

SHAME AND JEALOUSY: THE HIDDEN TURMOILS. By Phil Mollon. London: Karnac, 2002. 162 pp.

Phil Mollon's book on shame and jealousy represents one of the very first written on this topic in the British tradition. Mollon has made a valiant effort to bring the work of Melanie Klein and Heinz Kohut together around the notion of shame. Klein is there behind the concept of jealousy, akin to envy, and Kohut is there behind the concept of shame in Mollon's emphasis on empathy.

When Mollon writes that "shame is where we fail" (p. xi), the book begins on sound footing, since, as many have noted (Wurmser, Lansky, Kilborne, Morrison), shame experiences are by definition anxiety-filled fears of being ashamed, and being ashamed is the very mark of failure. Mollon makes a number of valid observations, and links feelings of failure and shame with difficulties in establishing viable object relations. However, by limiting his case material to so-called illustrations devoid of therapist–patient interactions, Mollon deprives the reader of that fabric of psychoanalytic work so valuable in connecting theory and clinical work.

Consider one of his first case illustrations: that of Pedro and Natalie, with whom Mollon worked as a couple. Whereas Freud emphasized how important it is for psychoanalysts to understand the specificity of knowledge gained through the use of the psychoanalytic method, Mollon appears to assume that what he does as psychoanalyst, psychotherapist, or couples therapist is all the same. In commenting on the compulsive promiscuity of Natalie, Mollon observes that she "felt shame and guilt about this, but was convinced that her sexual adventures were necessary for her psychic survival—representing for her an affirmation of her autonomy and sense of agency and efficacy" (p. 4). He then explains: "Natalie's experience of feeling her inner privacy to be agonizingly violated by Pedro's wishes to know of both her desires and her behavior in relation to other men" (p. 4). This reader would have wished for an account of Natalie's relationship to and fantasies about her therapist. Did she feel her inner privacy was in any way threatened by her therapist's desire to know?

When speaking of the “positive function of the lie” (p. 8), Mollon suggests that, because Natalie’s mother was invasive and controlling, Natalie needed to use lying “as an expression of autonomy and privacy” (p. 8). Here, too, there are problems: First, if lies do have functions, those functions are not necessarily “positive,” and if they are, how is “positive” to be assessed and judged? Second, the act of lying assumes that there is a known truth, and that the person in question is consciously deviating from it. Mollon believes that such deviation is understandable as an expression of “autonomy.” But all this assumes that there are no unconscious conflicts and that the line between truth and falsehood is clear. Alas, such a position can actually exacerbate shame in patients whose experience of the blurring of truth and falsehood belies clear categories. In my experience, the line between truth and falsehood, reality and fantasy, can never be clear or simple. When the analyst or therapist believes that there *is* a clear line, such a position can be a source of shame for the confused patient. Mollon distorts by oversimplification when he writes: “The lie is, paradoxically, a failed attempt at preservation of truth—the truth of the core self” (p. 9).

For Mollon, shame is the product of a false self. Consequently, empathy and Kohutian self psychology (by implication, the “truth”) constitute the only antidotes to such falseness. “The presence of shame,” the author writes, “signals a lack of empathy—either an actual lack, or a fear of such a lack. Similarly, the cure for states of shame and humiliation is empathy” (p. 20). This reader kept looking in vain for clinical material that might substantiate such assertions.

Mollon explains that:

Shame erupts when a gulf arises between self and other—a disruption of empathy, understanding, acceptance or attunement—resulting in an evaluation of the self as lacking or inferior in some way. . . . The cure for shame is the empathy provided by the other. [p. 142]

While there is some merit to the position that shame can be caused by want of empathy and cured by empathy, such a position

tends to distort or neglect internal and often unconscious superego conflicts and psychic disorientation. For Mollon, the cure lies in the Other; for the patient suffering from toxic shame, the problem and the pain lie in the Other.

For those of us who struggle with all the ambiguities, conflicts and uncertainties of shame dynamics, the precept that there is any single antidote to shame (such as empathy) may itself serve as a source of shame and humiliation, at least for those whose confusion results in shame-prone vulnerabilities. The author misses a chance to explore an intractable dilemma of shame: The more ashamed one is, the more one depends, *ipso facto*, on fantasies and perceptions of how one is being seen. This reaction, in turn, exacerbates shame vulnerabilities and contributes to narcissistic/paranoid defenses by attributing to the Other powers that the Other does not and cannot have.

In other words, Mollon's notion that only empathy can cure shame may actually damage narcissistically vulnerable, shame-prone patients by presenting to them shameful criteria by which to judge their confusion, resulting in greater feelings of helplessness. This can have the unintended consequence of making patients more dependent on the therapist/analyst, and of exacerbating their shame over such dependency.

One of the merits of this clearly written book is to underscore the central role of empathy in treating patients suffering from toxic shame. While this reader might have wished for a more detailed clinical account of how psychoanalysis can strengthen a patient's empathy, Mollon's book has the merit of calling attention to an important subject, and doing so in a way that is likely to command the attention of both self psychologists and Kleinians, thereby promoting often overlooked clinical dynamics.

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# ABSTRACTS

## REVUE FRANÇAISE DE PSYCHANALYSE

Abstracted by Emmett Wilson, Jr., M.D.

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“Marcel Proust, Visitor of Psychoanalysts”

This issue of the *Revue* is focused on Proust and his multivolume novel, *Remembrance of Things Past*. With the recent appearance of a new English translation, readers might want seriously to consider rereading or making their first-time acquaintance of this work. The novel has now been newly and very readably translated in six volumes under the overall title *In Search of Lost Time*.<sup>1</sup> Even with all Proust's famous digressions and meanderings, and the unfinished quality of the concluding volumes that Proust was working on right up to his death, this undeniably difficult but rich work is rewarding, and one with which psychoanalysts should familiarize themselves. Many have drawn parallels between Freud and Proust, and this volume of the *Revue Française de Psychanalyse* examines the ways in which Proust's psychological discoveries relate to those of Freud.<sup>2</sup>

A short summary of this complex novel is not possible. For readers unfamiliar with Proust, we can only hope the frequent allusions to the novel's scenes, episodes, and characters in this issue of the *Revue* are not too cryptic to follow, but rather sufficiently tantalizing to inspire interest in reading or rereading one of the

<sup>1</sup> Proust, M. (2003). *In Search of Lost Time*, ed. C. Prendergast. London: Penguin; New York: Viking.

<sup>2</sup> *Editor's Note*: For another *Quarterly* author's comments comparing Proustian and Freudian views of the past, see Eugene Mahon's article in this issue, p. 1063.

great works of the twentieth century. In attempting to condense a novel of 3,000 pages and hundreds of characters into a few paragraphs, I have prepared the following (admittedly inadequate) synopsis.

As a child, the narrator, Marcel, spends his holidays with his parents at his grandmother's home in Combray, a small town near Paris. There the scene of the ardently desired good-night kiss from his mother takes place, prevented sometimes by the visits of the family neighbor and friend, the elegant, cultured, and charming Charles Swann. The boy hides, waiting for his mother to come upstairs, hoping to insist on the kiss. Instead of becoming angry, the boy's father acquiesces and even lets mother spend the night in Marcel's room.

In Combray, there are two paths that the family takes on walks, Swann's Way and the Guermantes Way, which become highly symbolic in the novel, including standing for the rich and cultured middle class versus the aristocratic world. Swann is a welcome guest in aristocratic salons; his artistic sensitivity and sophistication are legendary. Swann's disastrous, jealousy-driven love affair with the courtesan Odette is narrated; the affair ends in their eventual marriage. As a boy, Marcel loves Gilberte, Swann's daughter. Later, he fancies a love for the Duchesse de Guermantes. As Marcel grows up, he enters the world of the aristocracy and comes to be accepted in the circle of the Duc and Duchesse de Guermantes, through a close friend, the Marquis de Saint-Loup, their nephew. The social gatherings of the *fin de siècle* society—aristocratic (the Guermantes) and bourgeois—the Verdurins, furnish many hilarious but bitterly sarcastic scenes.

At the seaside resort of Balbec, Marcel meets Albertine, with whom he eventually develops an intense relationship driven by jealousy, as Swann's was, and he becomes obsessed with her possible lesbianism. Albertine abruptly departs, then dies in an accident. The intense mourning for Albertine becomes a theme, as jealousy had been before.

Throughout the novel, the destructive activity of time is a constant theme, as time changes all the characters and things de-



scribed. Baron Charlus, the duke's brother, a Guermantes as well, is at first portrayed as an arrogant, enigmatic, aloof, and unpredictable character. His homosexuality is discovered by Marcel in a voyeuristic episode. Charlus descends into degradation and sadomasochism as he ages, now nodding to all passers-by out of fear that each might be someone whom he should acknowledge. The aristocracy is more or less devoured by the bourgeoisie, as the vulgar Mme Verdurin becomes the Princesse de Guermantes and Saint-Loup marries Gilberte.

All along, Marcel has wanted to be a writer, but feels he cannot write, and he remains a dilettante, frittering away his time at social events and in affairs. Many years later, at an afternoon reception at the Guermantes, Marcel has intense experiences with involuntary memories, leading to the memory of the longed-for good-night kiss from his mother and his happiness with her. He resolves to save his life by writing it, by capturing experience and involuntary memories, thus reaching his "true self." However, when he enters the salon where a masked ball is taking place, he is confronted with the recognition of time, aging, and death, and his denial of them. Now the novel is to be written in order to regain time.

**Andrée Bauduin and Françoise Coblence**, editors of this issue of the *Revue Française de Psychanalyse*, begin with an overview (pp. 389-391) of the problems with the psychoanalytic studies of Proust. For all the extensive critical and biographical studies on Proust, there is a curious and surprising lack of psychological and psychoanalytic writing about him and his work. Yet Freud and Proust have both been considered discoverers of the human heart, and some authors accord to Proust an anticipatory discovery of the unconscious. The rarity of psychoanalytic works on Proust is thus puzzling, and suggests some particular difficulties in bringing Freud and Proust together.

A contemporary of Freud and of Henri Bergson, Proust was a superb psychologist. His work contains what Freud called "a science of the mind." One must, however, give little credence to the sometimes alleged equivalence of involuntary memory and the un-

conscious. Proust's recovered past has nothing to do with the repressed. In psychoanalysis, there is a quest directed toward uncovering the past; the work of deciphering signs and indications of the past is what interests the analyst. Proust's "involuntary memory" begins with experiences and sensations, but these are amodal and timeless.

Among the singularities of the work, one must take into account the illusion of transparency between the relationship of the writer to his life, on the one hand, and that of the writer to his narrator, on the other. One can mock, or be irritated by, the multiplicity of works that, through texts and photographs, try to find the keys from which Proust's imagination composed and intertwined novel and biography. Many try to reduce the novel to a double of Proust's life. This seeming reduplication, sustained even by Proust himself in the novel, has had the effect of favoring a certain type of applied psychoanalysis that considers the novel as a direct emanation, but with novelistic mediation, of the personality of the author. These studies forget that the novel is, like all such works, a palimpsest to be deciphered, and that one must not take literally either the episodes of the novel or the theories forged by the author, such as those that concern love or memory.

Still, the novel can throw light on Proust's life, on condition that one take into account the changes engendered by the work of creation, the fictional elements of destinies and characters brought into play. The essays in this issue of the *Revue* analyze some of the novel's situations without immediately attempting to reattach them to their creator. The authors immerse themselves in many layered aspects of the novel and confront the deep complexity of its characters.

Proust offers much from which we can learn. Immersion into the constructed reality of the novel permits grasping the work as a tool for new psychoanalytic understanding. It offers an exceptional reservoir of themes that we have not finished tapping into. The novel permits us to explore such themes as the links between mother and son and between mother and grandmother, homosexuality in both sexes, and the differences and nuances in primal

scenes represented. Narcissistic problems are explored through the characters of the work and the fascinating representation of the world of snobs, whether aristocratic or *nouveaux riches*. The work of mourning in all its detail is exquisitely rendered. Separation from the primary object is described, transposed, and elaborated. The relation to the body and the corporeal is exquisitely detailed, from dream to illness. It is thus in Proust's perspicacity before the duplicity and hypocrisy of feelings and the force of denial, perhaps, that one finds his closest proximity to Freud.

Every analyst in his or her encounter with Proust might want to carry farther these reflections, either on the writer and the particularities of his life, or on the work itself. In that manner, the novel continues its creative role, as the author wished.

**On Reading Freud Together with Proust.** Pierre Bayard, pp. 393-406.

Bayard, the author of an important work on Proustian digression, reviews the similarities and differences between Freud and Proust. Though roughly contemporaries, Proust and Freud seem not to have known of each other's work. There are many similarities between the two, for both studied man and his psychological suffering, as well as the links between this suffering and the past. But one was a theoretician, the other a writer; this makes all the more interesting the confrontation between them. Starting off with shared observations, each constructed a different object, a different way of understanding the human psyche through his particular vision. We are in the presence of not only two thinkers, but of two fields of knowledge, with their limits, their peculiarities, and their particular modes of sorting out reality.

Proust's work, more than any other, shows the difficulty and impasses of applied psychoanalysis. Treating the literary work as an object, with psychoanalysis on the knowing side, risks missing what this work can show us of psychological life, and also runs counter to Freud's numerous placements of literature in a position of superiority. Freud regarded writers as teachers and was willing to listen to what they could bring to him. This problem is

especially acute with Proust, for by the number of his pointed psychological remarks, the breadth of his general reflection, and his concrete illustrations, he seems to supply an authentic knowledge of psychological phenomena. The depth of this knowledge leads one to ask whether it could not enrich the Freudian viewpoint—or even rival it. A pedestrian reading of the work through the filter of psychoanalysis carries the risk of failing to understand it and remaining exterior to it, especially since psychoanalysis is such a closed, coherent system.

Does Proust offer a coherent theory of the psyche? This would seem, at first blush, to indeed be the case. There are many seeming parallels between Freud and Proust—for example, in the theory of the multiplicity of the self described in the works of both. As every reader of Proust knows, his emphasis on the plurality of selves is an illusion maintained through the first volumes of this novel, until the final volume, when the narrator makes the decision to become a writer, evoking the idea of another self, the true self, that justifies his decision to write. There Proust speaks of the timelessness, the permanence of memory unalterable through time, leading one to think of the Freudian unconscious, ignoring time and death. The novel seems then to come close to a classic psychoanalytic opposition between the mobility of the surface of the ego and the fixity of the deeper aspects of the self.

However seemingly evident these may be, and however stimulating to the comparing critic, such similarities should not make one lose sight of the very significant differences. The first is where to situate this true self. Proust's involuntary memories—evoked by the taste of a madeleine dampened by tea, by the uneven pavement of the courtyard of the Guermantes—have disappeared from memory but are still active, and we, too, may recover our own when we are in touch with our true selves. But these can scarcely be said to be unconscious, certainly not in the strict Freudian sense, and they are not linked to a chain of traumatic events, which is a crucial aspect for Freud.

Should we call these involuntary memories preconscious? This term does not fit either, for the essential self that Proust evokes is

situated "somewhere else in the mind," which corresponds only poorly to the psychic availability of thoughts in the preconscious. A different type of depth is involved here, linked to another system of thought—one that, in order to grasp it, requires that we avoid the temptation to employ traditional Freudian categories. The elements that Proust speaks of are separated less by the criterion of consciousness than by the criterion of persistence, a persistence linked to euphoric access to an eternal truth. In the novel, it is a matter not so much of finding a past that has produced suffering, but of retrieving fragments from time. The remembered scenes have not disappeared from consciousness, but have a certain tonality no longer accessible, a certain atmosphere, that, when found again, gives access to the deeper self.

Moreover, the two types of self are not engaged in a conflictual relationship, as are the Freudian structures that define themselves principally by their opposition, leading to symptoms and to compromise formation. The deeper self is that which has survived the passage of years; it is not the active agent of pressure on the multiple self. It is the happy residue, even the synthesis of the true self.

There is also the question of dynamics, an aspect that is essential with Freud, but which is just about absent from Proust. This leads one to evaluate the play of forces that differ in the two writers. The moments when the true self becomes manifest in Proust mark a certain pressure on his part, but these are exceptional moments, and it is scarcely possible to think along the lines of the dialectical principles of the relation between two psychic structures.

This difference in topical and dynamic treatments cannot be separated from another difference—the most striking one, perhaps: the treatment of time. One cannot take the Freudian point of view and say that the unconscious in Proust, or that which takes its place, ignores time. For Proust, our psyche in all its dimensions seems constructed by a temporality by which only the sequence of unfolding events permits a man to reach his true personality and to become himself. The importance of time comes from the fact that, as the active principal factor of psychic mobility, it causes the changes and permutations of the different selves.

There again, the final revelation produces a reversal, since the deeper self does not know time, and this failure of recognition of time takes part largely in the definition of the deeper self. But this ignorance of time by the true self does not modify the importance of the major thesis, incessantly repeated, of a perpetual flowing and frittering away of all that surrounds us. On the contrary, it is because this erosion is so dominant and so radical, because we are the passive subjects of time, that it is important that something, these instants of eternity, be grasped in the way of compensation. But this necessity of survival does not invalidate the thesis of the passage of time and its destructiveness, in the Freudian sense in which the unconscious makes the conscious a false mask or a delusion. It tends rather to emphasize the passage of time in our lives and to prove its destructive force.

Even if the angles from which to read Proust are multiple, there is one that dominates all the others and draws them to itself, that is, from the point of view of exploring the relationship between time and the psyche. The Freudian postulate of the fixity of the unconscious is attacked in the novel, or at least brought into question, in general theoretical reflections, and put into practice by Proustian characters. Neither the narrator, Gilberte, Charlus, Saint-Loup, nor the Duchesse de Guermantes maintains the same identity at the end of the novel as at the beginning. One cannot say that each of these character's unconscious has changed, because the unconscious is not an essential element of the Proustian model, but one must recognize that the characters themselves have still been radically transformed. And the fact that they can achieve fragments of an unalterable and preserved past—especially in the case of the narrator, thanks to writing—does not at all modify this metamorphosis brought about by time.

It seems to Bayard that Proust asks questions more clearly than psychoanalysis does, and that Proust can, in taking off from a precise theory and in utilizing concrete examples, give psychoanalysis something to think about, in reflecting on time, fixity, mobility, and the human psyche. We can thus be led to review psychoanalysis from the point of view of this literary work—to ask our-

selves, for example, whether the plurality of selves cannot furnish another model for thinking about the discordances of the psyche, or whether there is not in Proust a configuration of mourning that differs from that which has prevailed since Freud. This leads us, at least ideally, to put literature at the place where Freud, in certain of his texts, attempted to place it.

**Was Proust a Precursor of “Ego-Psychology”?** Daniel Widlöcher, pp. 407-414.

Widlöcher emphasizes the lack of direct influence of Freud on Proust or of Proust on Freud. Indirect influences shared by Freud and Proust are quite evident, however. Proust read authors who remained close to the tradition of German psychology. From them, he retained some of the same principles we find in Freud: the relativity of subjective consciousness, the splitting of the ego, and the disjunction between psychic activity and consciousness.

Widlöcher points out the parallels between Proust and Freud in the proximity between the models of mourning found in “Mourning and Melancholia”<sup>3</sup> and in the volume of this novel whose title has been retranslated (in *In Search of Lost Time*) as *The Prisoner and the Fugitive*.<sup>4</sup> In Marcel’s mourning for Albertine, Proust describes a process in which all our selves have to deal with loss, one by one. All the aspects of Albertine have to be mourned by all our selves. To the detachment of the libido on the Freudian model, Proust responds with a particular type of forgetting. Far from doing away with the past, it places in the past the experience that it destroys in the present. The (internal) object dies because the one who contained it disappears: “It is not because others have died that our affection for them weakens, it is because we ourselves are dying” (p. 560 of the new translation).

The Proustian ego, for Widlöcher, appears as a composite closer to the self of ego psychology than the Freudian structural ego. In Proust, the ego is an ensemble composed of various aspects,

<sup>3</sup> Freud, S. (1917). Mourning and melancholia. *S. E.*, 14.

<sup>4</sup> In the earlier translation of the novel (*Remembrance of Things Past*), this volume was entitled *The Sweet Cheat Gone*.

contributing to the elaboration of a splintered subjectivity, that of the narrator. What is lacking in Proust is infantile sexuality and the intrapsychic conflict that results, as well as an unconscious in the proper sense of the term. Proust's view of the psyche is a psychology of the self that skips over the topographical separation of consciousness and unconsciousness, ignoring the theory of instincts.

Widlöcher also emphasizes the double temporality marked by the opposition between evidence of time that passes and that of the reparative, recovered instant. In the first, there is a loss of objects, the evanescence of the object of desire. The loved object disappears as one approaches it and thinks to possess it. The reparative instance comes in literary creation, bringing a solution in which the narrator, no longer a theorist of psychology, becomes a writer. He has the double task of constructing the account on which the psychology rests and retracing the experience of incorporated time that leads to the Proustian creation, the act of writing.

It is tempting to see in this double task a replication of the psychoanalytic situation. Psychoanalysis is marked with an alternation between reconstructive narration and sudden insight into experiences. Most often, the subjective experience of the account dominates, intended to inform another person, the analyst. This other, even given his or her mode of listening to the content and not to the formation of the words, is equally caught up in this mode of communication. This is the (lost) time of anamnesis, of reconstruction, of biography. The (regained) time of insight is equally retrospective, but it pertains to that which was just thought; it is the reflective, backward explanation of all or part of that which has been present (implicitly) in the preceding instant of mental life and which is expressed in the conscious experience.

The common traits between psychoanalytic insight and the experience of regained time should not make us underestimate the differences between them. Even if the remembering narrative is the same in both cases, it is not the same for recovered time. Proust the creator has illustrated a Freudian discovery. The bridge between lost time and time recovered implies a dimension that is equally present in psychoanalysis: the object of desire is finally unreachable, and the spirit must, in some way, re-create it.



**Interview with Julia Kristeva: "Proust's Transsubstantiation: A Suspension of Repression."** Andrée Bauduin and Françoise Coblence, pp. 429-452.

Julia Kristeva has published an important critical study of Proust.<sup>5</sup> In her interview with the two editors of this issue of *Revue Française de Psychanalyse*, Andrée Bauduin and Françoise Coblence, she further develops some of the issues raised in her book. Her work and her point of view furnish important counterweights to offset the frequent tendency to idealize Proust because of the extravagance as well as the beauty of his language and style and the aptness of his psychological observations on his characters. In this abstract, I can only touch on some of the points of this rich discussion between Kristeva and the editors.

Kristeva calls her approach *intertextuality*. She uses all sources of information to describe the semantic network in which, for example, the incident of the "madeleine memory" occurs in the novel. She uses not only the novel itself, but also its manuscripts with their many and extensive corrections, as well as other works of Proust, his correspondence, the facts of his biography, and his social milieu. In short, all these elements are employed to develop not so much an explicating construction, but rather the semantic architecture that surrounds the memory. She ranges far and wide in her analysis, and her analytic approach opens up to us the Proustian world, present and past. She explores what she calls *surimpressions*, or condensations, of Proust, through an extremely attentive and precise examination of the archeology of these impressions. In her view, a text constitutes its meaning from the relations that it weaves with the discursive environment. Whether the writer is aware of it or not, this environment and social field resonate and contribute to the writing itself, and offer in some way unconscious support to the writing. The archeology of a work provides a fecund means for deciphering the network of unconscious mean-

<sup>5</sup> Kristeva, J. (1994). *Le temps sensible: Proust et l'expérience littéraire*. Paris: Gallimard. Translation: (1996). *Time and Sense. Proust and the Experience of Literature*, trans. R. Guberman. New York: Columbia Univ. Press.

ings. She discerns in this archeology aspects of what Freud called primary process: displacement, condensation, and overdetermination.

Thus, an incident in the novel may be viewed as a sort of dream, and at the same time as an *intertext*. The wide range of Proustian memories can be viewed as condensations, and these Proustian condensations have no definable limits. It is the same in reading a text as in the interpretation of a dream and in psychoanalytic listening: we are engaged in an associative work that has no limits.

Taking the celebrated example of the madeleine cake moistened in tea, Kristeva shows the condensations and transformations involved in that memory, examining the name *Madeleine* as belonging to one of the characters in George Sand's novel, *François le Champi*, which the narrator's mother reads to him in the novel. Kristeva traces out the ramifications of the name, its contiguities, its displacements, and so on. She shows how Proust absorbs, disassembles, dresses up, and superimposes—in effect, composing hieroglyphics, with the general implication that it is up to us to decipher them. In the case of the madeleine, in the context of his relationship with his mother, the experience shifts metonymically from one woman to another, from one place to another, from one time to another, and opens a complex chain of associations that have become sustainable—visual and olfactory, and so on. The move is from mother to Aunt Léonie, and with it a degradation occurs, for Aunt Léonie is a gossipy, crippled old woman.

Proust mentions fanciful, colored Japanese paper, suggesting that the condition for talking of pleasure is to move from mother to Léonie—or even to Japan, if necessary. And it is the furniture of Aunt Léonie that Marcel bequeaths to a brothel in the novel, just as, in reality, after the death of his parents, Proust gave their furniture to a male brothel. So the episode of the madeleine, read by so many school children in learning French the world over, mobilizes at the same time the underlying texts of the novel and the biography of the author. Love and desire reverse themselves into rejection, hate, anger, and even death. Here we are at the

heart of the perversion and profanation that underlie Proustian sublimation.

Kristeva discusses the process of sublimation in Proust's writing, emphasizing his excessive, intense sensitivity to experience. Proust tries to bring his writing as close as possible to that which cannot be said, to the experiences and the instinctual from which he necessarily protects himself. Proust wants to be the conveyor of the sensible world in images, in words. To describe this process, Kristeva finds useful Proust's own term, *transsubstantiation*.

Kristeva feels that Proust approaches something in his writing that goes beyond psychoanalysis, something that indeed seems to go well beyond the clinical field. When he writes that ideas are substitutes for sorrow, or that sorrow is only the path through which certain ideas enter us, he alludes to depressive states, to moments of separation from the loved object, beginning with the maternal object, but he understands and means, more basically, the anxiety of collapse of the psychic apparatus under the assault of what Green called "the work of the negative,"<sup>6</sup> which explodes and disintegrates every unity—the unity of the self, of others, and the unity of language itself. The work of the negative includes instinct, desire, and their symbolization. All three interact to the point of placing into question one's identity and life.

Kristeva emphasizes the silence of that which is felt—the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of translating experience into words. She sees in this a closeness to autism for Proust, linking perversion and psychosis. Proust translates this autistic sensation into metaphors and syntax, but also into unheard, exorbitant, excessive accounts. Language itself is rendered ambiguous and polymorphous, leading the consciousness of the reader to states of super-competent memory, as well as to states of forgetfulness, nonsense, and confusion—as much dreamlike as anxiety ridden and pleasurable.

In Proust, we also see the sadomasochistic violence of desire. Kristeva insists on the violence of the Proustian universe and is neg-

<sup>6</sup> Green, A. (1999). *The Work of the Negative*. London: Free Association Books.

ative about all idealizing readings of Proust. This violence is found in his dissection of amorous love, especially that for Albertine, in which there is an obsessive jealousy, ending in her death. It can also be seen in the sarcasm in which not only all the characters bathe—including the most ideal, such as the Duchesse de Guermantes and Charlus—but also all the ideals of the narrator.

Even in shattering the desiring ego to the point of committing a sadomasochistic act, and in the smashing, pulverizing, crushing of sense and feeling into language, Proust nonetheless maintains the polyphony and grandiose sublimation of his poetic account and of his narrative, and he can, rightly, liken his novel to a painting or to a cathedral.

**On the First Chapter of *In Search of Lost Time* Considered as a Session.** Jacqueline Harpman, pp. 457-472.

On a far less metaphysical level than Kristeva, Harpman takes the approach of reading the opening pages of the novel as if they were the narration of a patient in a first session. With care and attention to the unconscious yet rich meanings of the text, Harpman provides a detailed commentary, noting that the 43-page initial chapter could easily provoke 500 pages of commentary. She discerns, in the drama of the kiss and the surrounding associations and digressions, keys to Proust's psychic makeup and to the novel that is to unfold. She emphasizes Proust's intense anger toward women, above all his mother, leading him to create in the novel a whole host of female monsters.

In the novel, the father gives up his role of upholding the law by giving the child Marcel over to the mother and acquiescing to her spending the night in the son's room. In the digressions of these introductory pages, Harpman points out the narrator's association to masturbation and to satisfying himself. The narrator comments about the sadness of not having his mother with him, noting that "the sobbing never stopped." The sobbing can be discerned in the asthmatic attacks to which he was subject. The themes of sadism and injury to his mother are legion, as well as his vengeance on his father, who, in the novel, has his profession taken away

from him, for the father of the narrator is not a physician. There is sarcasm, bitterness, and contempt for the character Dr. Cottard, as well as for other physicians who appear in the novel. Although this rich text, prelude to the novel's 3,000 pages, may have been written in an attempt to deal with the traumata of childhood, Proust's psychic suffering continued.

**An Essay on the Place Where *In Search of Lost Time* Was Created.** Aline Petitier, pp. 473-489.

Petitier discusses Marcel's search for a guide, master, or mentor to lead him into art and creativity. The theme of the guiding woman is found among the characters in the novel, but these prove inadequate. Proust knew that it was sterile to transfigure the world by solitary meditation, but a mother's hand to guide him was illusory, and his grandmother's attempts to attain a sublime world of art for him were chimerical. In the novel, Swann is the double for Marcel, sensitive but without the ability to create. There are artists and writers who might influence him, notably, the painter, Elstir. Petitier reviews these relationships, some helpful, some disappointing to Marcel. Intellectual debates, which furnish some high humor in the drama, also sometimes end up in vain—as in the conversations with Mme Cambremer, for example, where the insensitivity and shallowness of such discussions are evident.

Proust's ultimate and creative mode of handling experience can be seen in the example of a conversation concerning sea gulls floating on the water at sunset in the volume of the novel entitled *Sodom and Gomorrah* (pp. 209-215).<sup>7</sup> The sea gulls are described via their changing shades of color and their changing resemblances. Petitier points out Proust's handling of these exquisite transitions in shading and color and fantasy as the light gradually changes, until "they're flying away!" as Albertine comments, and night falls. Proust's writing accomplishes a transformation of the experience into exquisite sensitivity. Thus, it is the transfiguring power of words—not that of masters or teachers, intellectual dis-

<sup>7</sup> In the earlier translation, this volume was entitled *Cities of the Plain*.

cussions, or guiding mothers—that is evident in his descriptions of the changing light, with the sea gulls becoming yellow or mauve, as the scene comes more and more to resemble a painting, whether by Poussin or Monet.

By implication, what is important is Proust's floating attention to what he sees and hears and to what that arouses in him. But the mystery is not evident except in the transmutation into words. It is not an ephemeral vision; it is a transformation in accord with the evolution of light, transcending the passage of time and giving it a spiritual equivalent. Mme Cambremer, who shares the scene in which the sea gulls are described, shows in her comments that she is a dolt, not sharing Proust's sensitivity either to the world or to art. The recognition of true values does not come about except through artistic sensibility—the rarest quality, the most secret, the most precious in the novel. With this sensitivity, experience turns from useless intelligence to subjective impressions that are fleeting, but that give access to another scene. The subjective experience becomes central. One must discern the qualities of the fleeting impression before it is gone and also translate the effect that impression arouses, putting it into words—into something more than “Wow! Look at that!”

**Proust, the Parietal Image. The Little Patches of Yellow Wall and Childhood Memory.** Marie Bonnafé-Villechenoux, pp. 507-523.

For Proust, writing and painting are closely linked, and both draw on the visual imagery of memories. The emergence of an image—the power of evocation in a flat, two-dimensional space—conditions the emergence of memory and makes his account possible. Early on in the novel, a metaphor of patches of wall is developed, linking spaces and memories.

In this essay, Bonnafé-Villechenoux reviews the path thus taken by Proust, beginning with the taste of the madeleine, evoking visual images of the wall in the boy's room at Combray, of the candlelight on the area of the wall of the staircase—preceding the scene of his pleading with his mother and his father's acquiescence to the two sleeping together. Marcel's childhood scene is indelibly in-

scribed and linked to this memory of the patch of wall lighted by candlelight in the dark. This experience marks the beginning of Marcel's interest in art, writing, musical works, and in what is going to become a focus of his interest: the little piece of yellow wall in the *View of Delft* by Vermeer. This bright patch of wall becomes the screen representation of an oedipal memory. This theme of visual images of patches of wall runs throughout the novel.

Though it has been often commented on by critics and art historians, Bonnafé-Villechenoux feels that, from a psychoanalytic point of view, this theme is an invitation to the analyst to be attentive in sessions to the construction of memories, to allow the interplay between images and words to develop at its own tempo. These are mysteries about which art can enable a better understanding—the inscription of memories and fantasies, to use Freud's words, on the "actual surface of thought."<sup>8</sup> As analysts, though our attention is always certainly focused on the discourse taking place, if we use Proust as our guide, we become more sensitive to a background of particular mental images. The analyst will pay more attention, alongside an associative discourse, to certain evocations of figured elements.

In the analytic material, shadows on the walls, memories of a painted paper, reflections, images associated with plastic works, photographs, and so forth all take on a value, in the same way that a dream image is to be interpreted as a sign of defensive distancing, associated with the slow and difficult emergence of a well-guarded latent thought. Such an association in the course of a treatment forms a veritable screen, a surface, the representation of a visual image, that Proust restores to us so well. This approach to the material gives a better understanding of the affect and movement of the transference.

Freud dwelled little on the oneiric image, but paid more attention to the text, considered as a rebus. However, the pictorial

<sup>8</sup> Freud's original expression was: "*Die psychische jeweilige Oberfläche*," which he used in describing the Dora case (see, in English, *S. E.*, 7, p. 12). The expression also appears several times in his "Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis" and in "Papers on Technique."

images involved in the remembering of a dream, which we sometimes perhaps regard as unimportant in a session, presuppose an associative elaboration and are to be deciphered with the same care and value in the process as any other association.

**Sesame and Books.** Georges Gachnochi, pp. 539-550.

The French title of this essay echoes the title of *Sesame and Lilies*, a book Proust undertook to translate jointly with his mother.<sup>9</sup> Proust, in his preface to *Sesame*, does not, as the book's author does, praise reading, but warns against its dangers: those of arousing desires in us, making us contemplate supreme beauty and a world of forbidden treasures, the refinding of the lost object.

Gachnochi examines two closely connected scenes from the last volume of this novel, *Finding Time Again*.<sup>10</sup> In the first of these scenes, while waiting in the library of the Prince de Guermantes, the narrator distractedly opens a copy of *François le Champi* and receives a disagreeable shock, an impression of sadness that coincides with the somber thoughts of the moment. He recalls the night that was perhaps "the most sweet and the saddest of my life," the memory of his mother reading to him from this book. This involuntary memory, along with others—of stumbling on the uneven paving block of the Guermantes courtyard, and of the sound of a spoon against a plate, the stiffness of a napkin (pp. 175-176)—led him into an investigation into their meanings, and into a long essay on the role of writing and memory in making sense of a life. He resolves to write, to decipher these inner signs, and to seek immortality and denial of time through his writing.

There follows a second, almost traumatic scene when, upon entering the grand salon where a masked ball is in progress, the narrator has the impression that all the guests are wearing make-up to make them appear old. He realizes, though, that they actually *are* old, and so, too, is he. Gachnochi asks why the recognition of general aging opposes itself to the realization of the work the

<sup>9</sup> Ruskin, J. (1851). *Sesame and Lilies*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1990.

<sup>10</sup> In the earlier translation, this volume was entitled *Time Regained*.



narrator has set for himself. The narrator discovers the destructive action of time just at the moment when he wants to capture extratemporal realities. It is in this instant that there is a conscious recognition of the existence of time. He realizes that he himself is an old man; time has passed not only for others, but for him as well. His denial of time is thus recognized, as well as his denial of death.

The narrator places his denial of time and of his aging in relation to his mother. In his mind, he has remained a young man, just as his mother thought of him. His narcissism has kept him unchanged since his youth, continuing his identification with his mother. But, with this brutal confrontation with what amounts to a mirror—the masked ball with the unrecognizable, aged figures—he is forced to take into account the reality of time. Upon entering the salon, the narrator experiences a sense of strangeness, deriving from the destabilization of an identity up until then anchored in his mother's regard.

Swann is present in the memory of the madeleine: as an intruder, the guest whose visits always prevented mother's visiting Marcel in his room. But now, in this final scene, it is precisely a paternal image of Swann, now long dead, as the person who intruded on his relationship with the mother, that permits the narrator to shore up his beginning identification as an authentic artist who is creating his work from inside himself. Swann fulfills the role of the father at this moment of recognition of time and death and of separation from the mother. The two ways of the novel, Swann's way and the Guermantes way, are now united, so that one can enjoy through the narrator the maternal aspects of a lost paradise (the past) and the paternal ones (the future)—both linked to the writing of the novel, a work constantly spurred on by the memory of the past.

**The Relevance of Marcel Proust for Psychoanalysis.** Hendrika C. Halberstadt-Freud, pp. 585-602.

The author feels that masculine perversions have too long remained enigmatic. Proust focused rightly on the role of the mother

as the center of the underlying conflict, a view very different from Freud's naive claim that the relationship with the mother is the most affectionate and least conflictual of all human relations. Freud, especially in *The Interpretation of Dreams* but throughout his work, elaborated a masculine psychology from a masculine point of view, less completely applicable to feminine psychology. If a woman had been the founder of psychoanalysis, would she not have accorded a much more important place to the mother as a central figure, as Anna Freud and Melanie Klein later did? Janine Chassguet-Smirgel's and Joyce McDougall's work on perversions, taking up where Freud left off after several decades, also put the emphasis on the relation with the mother.

Anticipations of Proust's conflicts with and anger toward his mother and other themes of the novel are to be found in Proust's earlier writings, where they are more overt. In this novel, they are much more veiled. The novel was not begun until well after his mother's death. Here the profanation of mother and of grandmother, and the resulting sense of guilt, become central but often covert themes. From the time of the good-night kiss on, there is an unresolved dyad of mutual exchange from which the father is excluded (or from which he has excluded himself). Proust had a sadomasochistic and perverse relationship with his mother, who seemed to say to him: "Be strong, but stay with me, act like a man, remain in my power"—while Proust engaged in blackmailing his mother with his illnesses. Later, the same relationship is portrayed in the novel between the narrator and Albertine, whom Marcel "imprisons" in the same way that his mother kept him prisoner.

In revisiting the story of Oedipus, we find two interpretations, Freud's and Proust's. In Proust, there is not so much an oedipal history as a perverted dyad, a symbiotic, infantile illusion excluding triangulation and preventing oedipal development in the usual sense. The son is victim of the mother, who invades him under cover of taking care of him. Mother is a cruel seductress, strict and enforcing of the rules, while father is permissive and looks on at the relationship between mother and son with a blind indulgence. Mother's behavior and attitude are ambiguous, involving

either a mixture of love and hate or a dissimulation of all emotion, or are portrayed as trying to convey the opposite of what she actually feels. In Proust, we find an extreme ambivalence toward the mother, an unbelievable desire for love and tenderness going along with a murderous rage. Freud was interested in the vicissitudes of libido, and Proust in the vicissitudes of hate. Love in Proust's sense is always mixed with jealousy and the fear of losing the other's love.

Halberstadt-Freud feels we can learn much from Proust about different forms of homosexuality and perversions. Proust was a master observer, and there are many aspects that one would not know about without the observations of Proust, who knew such things more intimately than Freud. Proust was extremely sensitive and capable of expressing with great finesse what he observed in the interactions of other humans. He was a master of reading expressions and their hidden meanings. Proust saw that hostility can be dissimulated in eroticism. Erotic excitation for Proust contains perversion and is closely linked with fetishization and dehumanization—serving in the novel to repair momentarily the frustrations and infantile traumata that have menaced the masculinity of the narrator.

One can also learn a lot from Proust about feminine psychology and the mother-daughter relationship. The homosexual links of daughter to mother must be analyzed, else an analysis is not complete. It took a long time for the relations between mother and daughter to come to the attention of psychoanalysts, given Freud's rigid masculine model. The struggle is similar for Proust and for women, with the central question being whether pleasure is for the self or for mother. The question becomes: "Who is going to suffer and die because of my pleasure?"

Homosexuality is not an abandonment of the oedipal phase, as Freud and classical theory state, and here Proust comes closer to the facts. There is less of a rivalry with the father and more of an overidentification with the mother—a failure to separate from her and a fight for independence with respect to her, associated with a desire to rest close to her and always to give her pleasure

—that is at work in homosexuality and in other problems where sex is in question, such as perversions. Proust is much clearer than Freud on this.

Both authors have their strong points and their blind spots, and Proust's view may be seen as complementary to Freud's.

**In the Shadow of the Mother–Daughter Bond in Marcel Proust.** Raymonde Coudert, pp. 603-616.

*In Search of Lost Time* (and the earlier translation, *Remembrance of Things Past*) has often been read and seen as an illustration and exploration of the mother–son dyad, but feminine couples are also present in the novel in an astonishing number—some fleeting and some lasting. To name some examples among the many, there are: Aunt Léonie and Eulalie; Aunt Léonie and the maid, Françoise; Françoise and Eulalie; Céline and Flora; Mlle Vinteuil and her lesbian friend; Odette and Mme Verdurin; Odette and Gilberte; Gilberte and Mme Léa; the Duchess and the Princess of Guermantes; the Duchess of Guermantes and the Princess of Parma; the baroness Putbus and her chambermaid; Mme Bontemps and her niece, Albertine; Gilberte and her unnamed daughter, Mlle de Saint-Loup; and the actress Berma and her daughter. These include mother–daughter couples, lesbian couples, and feminine couples with sadistic or collusive elements.

The paradigm of these feminine couples is the narrator's mother and grandmother, from which the others are quite varied declensions and combinations. Another feminine couple, the wife and daughter of Swann, are excluded from visiting the narrator's family, where Swann is received on condition that he be treated as a bachelor because his wife, Odette, was a kept woman, and his daughter, Gilberte, was conceived from that unfortunate union. The mother–daughter pair, Odette and Gilberte, dominate the attentions of the narrator in the volume called *In the Shadow of Young Girls in Flower*,<sup>11</sup> and by the end of the novel, in *Finding Time Again*, he cannot even tell them apart.

<sup>11</sup> In the earlier translation, this volume was entitled *Within a Budding Grove*.

The insistent Proustian fantasy is of being a woman, to be a woman with a woman, to know what happens between two women. It appears in the implacable jealousy of the hero in his search for the deep truth about Albertine once she is gone. In the volume called *Sodom and Gomorrah*, the theme of lesbianism is encoded in the word *Gomorrah*. Gomorrah stands not just for lesbianism, but also for the mythical territory of the archaic mother-daughter bond, though one that is imagined as more radical, purer, more absolute. Proust anchors in the theme of Gomorrah a passion with two aspects, sadistic as well as amorous. Gomorrah is inseparable from the attack against the maternal, while at the same time giving testimony to an archaic attachment to the old, dark continent. The meaning of Gomorrah for Proust is that of a negative, denied, denigrated, toxic feminism.

As few writers have, Proust approached this incestuous mother-daughter link, the foundation of psychic bisexuality in women, according to Freudian principles. Proust lets us see more than Freud did of this "dark continent." It is gender itself, not homosexuality, that is the secret—not only for the narrator, but also for the writer as well as the reader. The secret of gender for each, for everyone, lies in the fascination felt by both sexes for their fathers *and* their mothers in this conflict of resemblances, in this combat of identity that runs again and again toward father and then toward mother, toward male and then female, toward the woman in the man and the man in the woman. Being born as, and living as, one sex or the other and one sex *and* the other is what drives us to desire.

**Ambivalence and Challenge, the Relations between Marcel Proust and His Father.** Gabrielle Rubin, pp. 637-646.

Proust's father is very much present in this novel, as several episodes show. In actuality, Adrian Proust was a physician of some note who traveled widely and was instrumental in formulating accepted principles of public health. He was also a womanizer and an unfaithful husband, similar in many aspects of his behavior to the Duc de Guermantes in the novel. However, as the father of

Marcel in the novel, he is deprived of his profession as a physician, and physicians are generally mocked. Three passages in the novel illustrate Proust's very ambivalent relationship with his father.

First, the father is humiliated in his acquiescence to the mother's sleeping in Marcel's room. The father accepts this castration and indeed inflicts it on himself. He is not the guarantor of the Law. His complicity in giving up the mother to Marcel for the night, and in letting Marcel obtain his name-day gift of books, including Sand's *François le Champi*, two days ahead of time, shows that the Law can be broken. His father abandons Marcel and abandons his role as representative of the Law, thus preventing triangulation. Marcel wants a father capable of fully assuming the role of a father, one who would have helped him through the oedipal phase, but the father in the novel fails to do this.

Proust, throughout his life, consulted doctors about his illnesses, but did not follow their recommendations. All his maladies, Rubin suggests in this essay, occurred in defiance of his father. The asthma was a cry of love, of hate, of admiration, and of denigration of his father.

Yet the father is also presented as triumphant in this novel. An illness of the young narrator prevents him from seeing Gilberte, with whom he is in love. A doctor is called, who prescribes violent and drastic purgatives and milk, "only milk." Marcel's mother disregards the prescriptions and Marcel gets worse. When, finally, the doctor's orders are followed, Marcel improves. The "imbecile" was a great doctor, and it was the mother who did not follow the rules. Doctors in the novel resemble Dr. Cottard, the character who is an excellent diagnostician, but is presented as otherwise a mediocrity—a fool and a boor. Proust mocked doctors, was certainly ambivalent about them, and was savagely ironic about their intellectual mediocrity. He disregarded their prescriptions, and many of his characters live or die for other reasons—as, for example, the novelist Bergotte, who would have been cured if a doctor had not intervened.

Finally, the father in the novel is presented as sad, maligned, and mistreated. The composer, Vinteuil, who according to Rubin represents Proust's father, is mocked and profaned by his homo-

sexual daughter and her lesbian lover in the scene in which the two use the portrait of her dead father for their sexual rituals. As noted elsewhere in this issue of the *Revue*, Proust himself gave the family furniture, and the photographs of the women whom he loved and respected the most—including his mother's—to a homosexual bordello, and permitted the profanation of them by prostitutes.

There was a perverse, cruel side to Proust the man, yet he was sensitive to the pain and sadness that his homosexuality caused his own father. His father's pain must have been immense in facing this strange son, who stopped him short with his incurable illnesses and embarrassed him socially by virtue of his homosexuality. Despite the denigration of the narrator's father in the novel, the paternal presence is as essential in the work as it was in Proust's own life.

**“Act As If I Didn't Know.”** Michel Schneider, pp. 647-660.

In Proust's earlier work, *Against Sainte-Beuve*, there is an imaginary conversation between Proust and his mother. In it, there is an important comment that indicates a secret pact between them: “Act as if I didn't know,” the mother says as she listens to his explanations and theories. In this work, mother and son play at literature as if they were playing at bandits, hide-and-seek, or with dolls. “You're becoming a writer, and I didn't know it” is another revealing comment, also indicative of their secret pact.

Schneider feels that in these secret pacts may be discerned the origin of Proust's homosexuality and of his being a novelist: a double secret, as it were. There were two unconscious pacts, one of homosexuality and the nonrecognition of the difference between the sexes, and the other of death and the nonrecognition of the irreversibility of time. The first is at the center of perversion, while the second permits artistic creation. Two couples, Vinteuil and his daughter in *In Search of Lost Time (Remembrance of Things Past)*, and Proust himself in relation to his mother, exemplify this closely interrelated phenomenon of vice and genius—or, in psychoanalytic terms, perverse sexuality and artistic creativity.

To create a perversion, a contract is required dating back to early childhood, by which each of the two—mother and son, in general—proceeds to a disavowal. That of the son relates to maternal castration: “I pretend that I don’t know she does not have a penis.” The mother’s disavowal concerns the sexuality of the son: “I act as though I don’t know he has desires.” Evidently, between Proust and his mother, sex and sexuality were not the direct objective of this pact of reciprocal not knowing. It is in the domain of literature—in Proust’s artistic creations—that sublimation displaces these two disavowals. The mother acts as though she did not know that her son writes; the son acts as though he does not know that she knows.

“Pretend like I don’t know” exists at the turning point of neurosis and perversion. It is at the same time internal to the subject, in what Freud designated as a splitting of the ego, and frequently links two subjects, one neurotic and one perverse. “I don’t know” characterizes neurosis; it is the fantasy by which pleasure is not possible unless it remains unconscious. But in perversion, the “pretend that” asks the other to assure, through knowing, the *not knowing* in which the subject wants to remain in order to find pleasure.

In neurosis, there is a game of hide-and-seek between desire and knowing, a reality known but not accepted. On the other hand, to “pretend that I don’t know” constitutes a more elaborate contractual disavowal, proper to perversion. There is by complicity a contract of not knowing. There is no transvestite whose mother has not refused to see that her son was stealing her underclothes in order to dress up in them. Finding her son in her undergarments, the mother says nothing and turns away. The disavowal by the mother of the son’s perverse behavior is her response to the son’s disavowal of the mother’s sex.

How is it that Proust was able to become a writer? His novel would not have been written without the presence of perversion, but it also served as a check on his perversion. Usually, we talk of sublimation in psychoanalysis when we speak of creativity. It



would be more accurate in the case of Proust to talk of a curse, of distress, vice, beauty, laughter, and fault—to attempt to understand the ways in which *In Search of Lost Time* is not the book of a homosexual, nor a novel of homosexuality, and still less an apology for it, as some have supposed. There are few books more cruel toward homosexuals and homosexuality. It is a novel by a man who loved men, but who suffered from this love. Sublimation is involved, certainly, but as a transposition of the sexual into something it is not.

In the novel, Mlle Vinteuil's lesbian friend, who spat on the composer's photograph, went on to decipher the illegible scrawl of Vinteuil's manuscript of his septet, and shepherded it to publication, restoring him to the figure of a respected father. Thus, perversion gave way to the creation of beauty. Analogously, Proust delegates the sexual impulse to another who is not he, but who *is* he as well—the author of his novel, the narrator. The offer of an object of knowledge, or of pleasure, is not between Marcel and his mother, but between the narrator and an absolute and anonymous reader.