

Meeting - May 1942

A.P.A

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I learned that there are great difficulties concerning the psychoanalytic institutes and training, and even a danger of a split in the American Psychoanalytic Association. This meeting is supposed to try to master these difficulties. This might be done in two ways: either one listens to the various parties, takes their utterances at their face value, and investigates what of them is correct and what<sup>44</sup> not. Or one follows the impression that other and more important differences are hidden behind that what is being said, - then one has to look for these differences; which does not, or at least, not only, mean to analyze the persons in question; these persons would rightly protest, for psychoanalysis is no argument in polemics; but it might be possible that there are general changes and tendencies in the development of our science, or ~~rather~~ rather in the relationship of this science to a changing world, which ~~only reflect~~ are ~~only~~ reflected in the personal troubles. When everything in this world has become unstable, there might be some connection between the instability in our little field and this greater instability. The personal difficulties might be mere reflections of more principle ones.

I know almost nothing about these personal difficulties. Perhaps, I should therefore keep silent in this discussion. - I do not believe so. My ignorance may be advantageous: 1.) As an outsider, I may be in a better position to appeal for consideration of our great task which is endangered to be destroyed by minor differences. 2.) The outsider may, perhaps, see better the general issues behind the surface. - Anyhow, I would like to make a few comments.

For this purpose, I would like first to point to the ~~absurdity~~ fact that some of the suggested proposals are entirely absurd if looked upon from a general theoretical viewpoint, for example the independence of the institutes from the branch societies, or the idea of several different institutes in one and the same city. - For what is the purpose of our whole association? Certainly not only the protection of the professional interests of the psychoanalysts; rather, according to our consti-

tution "the study and advancement of the psychoanalytic science as founded and developed by Sigmund Freud". This is done by scientific meetings, by research and training. Research and training are the more important means; they decide the future of psychoanalysis. To limit the activity of the branch societies to scientific meetings means to annul their essential purpose. They are supposed to do research and training work - and where there are psychoanalytic institutes, they do so by means of these institutes. A direct and independent connection of the institutes with the American Psychoanalytic Association would mean that the American Association would have in every city two competitive organizations: a society and an institute. - - And why several institutes in the same city? The increase of pupils and teachers of an institute would certainly be no reason for a split; the advantages of a united organization would rather suggest to subdivide an institute, if necessary, into different branches, but under the same direction. There are only two reasons thinkable for the establishment of several institutes in the same town: a) either because there are too many colleagues who wish to be directors of an institute, or b) because the different institutes teach different things. - To consider the first point would be ridiculous. And concerning the second point, I would say that it is certainly necessary that there is freedom of teaching in the development of a science; but within a frame, common to us all, which represents the essence of the science itself. If this frame really is in common, different opinions about details may be taught in one and the same institute. But if this frame is abolished, in other words: if the validity of psychoanalysis as such is doubted, - the elaboration of these doubts should be done at other places than in psychoanalytic training institutes.

Alexander once expressed the opinion that psychoanalysis has come of age. Now it is a science like any other science, and no politic, and <sup>a</sup>the "psychoanalytic movement" has become as impossible as an "ophtalmological movement". - I do not intend to talk about the fact that psychoanalysis better is not compared to ophtalmology, but to general physiology, because of the importance

and the generality of its subject matter. It is of more importance that it should be compared to general physiology of several hundred years ago, when the scientific study of the body and its functions just began and had to fight a severe struggle against its magic and religious predecessors. At that time, I think, there existed a kind of "physiological movement". - In the mental realm, magic thinking prevailed much longer, and it infiltrates psychology everywhere, still, or rather again, to-day. (It is true, paradoxically sometimes disguised as its opposite, as pseudo-materialism and longing for "experimental proofs".) - The technical world of to-day certainly is interested in natural science as in the prerequisite of techniques. But this tendency towards natural science is very limited by <sup>a/</sup> simultaneous tendency to the opposite, especially in the field of psychology: towards the befogging of many issues, towards mysticism and instability, also in science. I think that Zilboorg was right when he tried to see in the so-called "culturalism" in psychoanalysis, as in a tendency to deny the importance of the biological basis of human needs, a tendency of the same kind; something similar is true of the opposite view point, which sees only a "psycho-somatic" biologism, - instead of studying just the interrelationship: <sup>t</sup> The changes of biological structures and needs, brought about by culturally determined experiences. - The science of psychoanalysis gives us a unreplaceable tool for the study of this interrelationship. According to its method and viewpoints, psychoanalysis should be supposed to be of much greater help in this present emergency, f.e., than it really is. Its factual insufficiency may partly be due to this unfavorable disintegration in psychoanalytic development, which we are just talking about (and which psychoanalysis shares with other similar progressive and rational ideas); partly it is due to the circumstance that psychoanalytic research so often was limited to questions of the therapy of neuroses. - In order to enable psychoanalysis to solve its really important task, in a better way, - we need research and training, we need good and reliably psychoanalytic institutes. We have to defend our knowledge against a

still hostile world.

To "defend" a knowledge? Does this formulation not show my conservative and even reactionary nature? Do the "orthodox" analysts not ~~show~~<sup>reveal</sup> themselves thus as dogmatists? To "defend" scientific insights against innovations may mean to stop any possibility of progress. Is it not that what the ~~the~~ "orthodox" refuse to see in their efforts to "swear in" the pupils of the psychoanalytic institutes to Freud?

It is true that such a "swearing in" would be the end of all science, and that science and dogma are incompatible. - But it is not true that such a thing is our aim. You know that Freud himself always has stressed this point (and it has often been said that Freud himself was a real man of science whereas only his pupils became sectarians); he has revised his theory of anxiety, his theory of instincts several times. - And nevertheless the same Freud ~~is~~ who knew that if theory and facts do not fit together, the theory has to be changed and not the facts, - the same Freud wrote the following words:

"The battle is still going on, but in a more respectable way. There is another new factor, and that is that in the scientific world, a kind of buffer state has been formed between analysis and its opponents, consisting of people who will allow that there is something in analysis (and even believe in it, subject to the most diverting reservations) but who, on the other hand, reject other parts of it, as they are eager to let everyone know. What determines their choice is not easy to guess. It seems to be a matter of personal sympathies... The circumstance that the structure of psychoanalysis, although unfinished, nevertheless already possesses a unified organization from which one cannot select elements according to one's whim seems not to enter the minds of these eclectics. When I consider these half or quarter followers, I never get the impression from any of them that their rejections are based on an examination of the material. (New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, Hogarth Press, 1933, p. 178)."

By this quotation I intend to say: We have to distinguish between the "unified organization of the structure of psychoanalysis", and the different applications of this organization to various concrete problems and to new phenomena. - If phenomena which hitherto had not been investigated psychoanalytically do not find the <sup>an</sup> explanation by Freud's writings, that does not necessarily mean that these writings are wrong. It may be that Freud's principles, if intended to be applied to a new subject, have to be applied in a new way. And if this or that special opinion or viewpoint of Freud turns out to be not quite correct (and I myself have published objections against different opinions of Freud), that does not mean that the principles of Freudian thinking - the dynamic viewpoint, the unconscious, the libido theory - are proven to be wrong.

Certainly it is true that even the basic principles of a science are not eternal, - as we see ~~for~~ <sup>ex</sup>.e. in physics. But after the principles have proven their usefulness, they may only be given up when they are disproved. This is not the place to show that in my opinion the more modern attempts to disprove Freud's basic principles have not succeeded better than the more ancient ones.

I said that in psychoanalytic institutes different opinions about concrete problems are advantageous, but that a conformity <sup>of opinion</sup> about the "basic principles" is necessary. But who is going to decide what is "basic principle" and what "concrete application"? So I am introducing dogmas again, after all, and am going to "swear in" pupils in "basic principles"?

I was of the opinion that those who have understood psychoanalysis would agree about what its basic principles are. After having read a certain modern literature I have to admit that this was an error. Karen Horney is of the opinion that she is retaining "the essence" of Freud - which will at last be presented in its true light by her - in stressing the following points of accordance between her and Freud:

- 1) the formulation that every psychic occurrence is determined;
- 2) the formulation that there is an unconscious;
- 3) the formulation that the dominant forces in human beings are emotional in nature and that such emotions are in conflict with one another;
- 4) the theory that errors are the expressions of hidden tendencies (here it must be noted that Mrs. Horney comments on this theory: "... though disputable in many details"), and that dreams are wish-fulfillments;
- 5) in the method of work which studies the relation of the patient to the analyst as typical of his interpersonal relationships.

But on the other hand she says:

“The theoretical superstructure, which is false, is to be stripped off; the correct observations, made by Freud, are, however, to be retained, and simply interpreted differently. - Truth to tell, much of that which she calls "theory" and wants to "strip off" is nothing other than observation; on the other hand, however, psychoanalytic theory, like every scientific theory, is merely the best and briefest organization and classification of observations - which can no more be stripped off arbitrarily than physics can give up all its theories and still remain physics.

What is it, precisely, that gives offence to Mrs. Horney and that must be changed so that psychoanalysis can attain its full flower? It is: the libido theory; the Oedipus complex; the concept of narcissism; the conceptions of the psychology of woman; the theory of the instincts; the theory that childhood is of special significance; the concept of transference; the concepts "ego" and "id"; the theory of anxiety; the concept "super-ego"; the conception of the formation and significance of guilt feelings; the conception about masochism; and the conception of the mode of operation of psychoanalytic therapy.

Anyone who knows psychoanalysis realizes that the things Mrs. Horney wants to do away with are the essence of psychoanalysis. If all that is to be stripped off, then the psychoanalysis which remains will be similar to Lichtenberg's "knife without a

blade that had no handle."

So the "basis" which Horney retains, and believes to be sufficient to call her method still "psychoanalysis", seems really very small. Freud's opinion that every mental phenomenon is determined loses its significance if one adds that psychoanalysis is no longer to be a genetic psychology; the Freudian theory of the unconscious loses its significance when we see from the examples cited that Mrs. Horney's concept of "unconscious" is something totally different from Freud's, namely, that the defense-function and the interrelationship of many character traits are not clearly conscious to the possessors of the character, whereas Freud, f.e., means that incest and murder wishes, of which the individual knows nothing whatsoever, are nevertheless operative within the personality. That there are conflicts within the person does not reveal much, if one does not clarify what is in conflict with what; and Mrs. Horney must think about this absolutely differently from Freud since she does not believe in the fundamental significance of the instincts.

As I said above: it certainly has to be admitted that once new insights may make <sup>also</sup> the "basic principles" and the whole psychoanalysis problematic. But if this happens, the elaboration of these problems do not belong into the training institutes. "Freedom of teaching" - sure. But if the freedom consists in contradicting the basic principles of psychoanalysis in which all the analysts still believe, the freedom to teach that Freud was entirely wrong should be ~~held~~<sup>executed</sup> in other places than in the psychoanalytic institutes which ~~have~~ bear the name of Freud. - It also has to be admitted that ~~as~~ the statement that somebody has "resistances" does not disprove his anti-analytic teachings. His arguments have to be tested objectively. But that does not mean that those people who agree upon certain "basic principles", and now intend to apply those principles in detailed scientific research work, should be obliged to let themselves be disturbed in their work by the resistances of people who continuously criticize the "basic principles". - And why

should such polemics against Freud be called "psychoanalysis", and be done on "psychoanalytic institutes"?

It is true that certain ~~ix~~ customs in the psychoanalytic societies differ from other scientific societies and have similarities with those of "sects". That analyzed persons gather and exclude not-analyzed ones, reminds one of "esoteric rites". But that is made necessary by the very nature of psychoanalysis' subject. Within psychoanalysis, freedom of research certainly is necessary. The criticism of psychoanalysis itself should not be done in the analytic societies and in its institutes.

Back to training questions: The American Psychoanalytic Association is very strict in its regulations with regard to choice and sieving training candidates. The results are, nevertheless, not too encouraging. Perhaps another quality of "strictness" would be needed. The problem is, perhaps, not so much, w h o is going to grain, and also not, what methods of training should be applied, but rather: w h a t is taught. The actual practice of the institutes shows a regrettable desintegration of the science of psychoanalysis which asks for greatest caution. There are similar phenomena in other fields <sup>that</sup> ~~of~~ psychoanalysis.

<sup>red</sup> What is to be done? - Without ~~the necessity to~~ <sup>having</sup> consider the complicated personal matters in the American Psychoanalytic Association in detail, it seems to us that certain practical conclusions have to be drawn from the aforesaid:

1.) There should be no <sup>absolute</sup> ~~organizational~~ separation of the institute from the branch societies. - Such a separation would not solve the difficulties which have arisen within certain branch societies; these difficulties would only be displaced into difficulties between the branch societies and the institutes.

2.) No institute should be tolerated within the American Psychoanalytic Association whose teachings are not in accordance with Freud's basic principles.



3.) There is only one psychoanalysis in the frame of which many different opinions about detail questions are possible. To give the pupils the impression that there are two types of psychoanalysis, a more orthodox one and a more modern one which has overcome certain "prejudices of Freud", should, because such statement is wrong, be forbidden.

<sup>Societies</sup> 4.) The control of the ~~Association~~ institutes by the Association should in no way be reduced. - The danger that a few training analysts may essentially differ from psychoanalysis, is much greater than that this might be the case with a branch society.

5.) The regulation, that no member of the American Psychoanalytic Association is permitted to do any teaching except on order of a training committee, should be strictly enforced.

6.) Training analysts should not be appointed by the local training committees, but by the central training committee of the American Psychoanalytic Association only.

7.) It should be prohibited for members of the American Psychoanalytic Association to join any other society which maintains any training institute outside of the frame of the American Psychoanalytic Association.

8.) The regulations about foundation and acceptance of new branch societies do not need any change.

I know that under the present circumstances an acceptance of these suggestions would bring the danger of a split of the American Psychoanalytic Association. But I am of the opinion that this danger could not be avoided by compromises.

Besides all this, something else is necessary: I think that all analysts who are deeply interested in the training and progress of their science, are entitled to know more about the present personal difficulties, and to get the information about it in an objective way. It has been suggested that the American Psychoanalytic Association may appoint a committee to study all events in the New York Psychoanalytic Society which are at the root

of the present difficulties, and give a report to the plenum of the American Psychoanalytic Association. But how about the Washington-Baltimore Society, which is to such a degree in accordance with the "Society for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis"? What about the Chicago society where, as far as I learned, the cleavages of New York reflect themselves in different ways? - I suggest that the investigations of the committee to be appointed should not be limited to the New York psychoanalytic society; the committee should be entitled to clarify everything the clarification of which is necessary for the full insight into the present state of affairs.

It is often stated:unity strengthens. But that is valid only as long as a great common aim makes it necessary to sacrifice "little differences". Where big differences have arisen, "unity" - inducing compromises - may weaken. - Our aim is not the conservation of a certain organization at any cost; also not: to ~~give~~ make a good impression on the outside world. But: elaboration of psychoanalysis as of a natural-scientific psychology, and the use of this science in the service of mankind.

Knowing that to-day's discussion has an informal character, I renounced to give the above suggestions in the formulation of official motions. I would like to ask you only to take this as a principle contribution to the discussion and as a admonition ~~not~~ ~~to~~ ~~see~~ ~~the~~ ~~forest~~ ~~and~~ ~~not~~ ~~only~~ ~~the~~ ~~trees~~. to see the forest and not only the trees.

*Freud*