

~~OTTO FENICHEL~~

MEMBERS OF THE SAN FRANCISCO PSYCHOANALYTIC SOCIETY, MEMBERS OF
THE PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY GROUP OF LOS ANGELES, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS:

Reluctantly and with a heavy heart did I agree to address this Memorial meeting to honor our late friend, co-worker and teacher, Otto Fenichel. He died so suddenly -- the time that has elapsed is so short and the gap left in our science by his death is so huge and seems so impossible to fill that I feel at a loss to say anything that would give comfort to us or to the cause he left behind. Only our psychoanalytic knowledge that in mourning for a deceased friend we undergo a psychological process of identification encouraged me to talk tonight.

I think it is necessary, especially for us -- who study psychoanalysis, who practice psychoanalysis, who teach psychoanalysis, -- to undergo this process of identification not only emotionally, but also to remain intellectually and consciously aware of whom we are identifying with and why. As psychoanalysts, our duty is relentless intellectual honesty with ourselves in facing death -- our own or that of a friend.

If we allow only our emotions to carry us away, we are in danger of falling prey to natural unconscious ambivalences: of overdoing praising our friend from whom we must part -- but at the same time forgetting, repressing his scientific achievements because they

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indicate the heavy obligation to carry on and to continue where he left off. In an attempt to deny the limitation of our own lives, we might be only too willing to concede immortality to the deceased, in order to share this by way of identification. For us as psychoanalysts it is not enough to preserve the significance of a leading teacher of our science only in our hearts -- our intellect must remain conscious of who Otto Fenichel was and what he stood for.

It is my impression that when Freud died some of his former followers in a dim emotional awareness of the mourning process of identification, developed defenses against this identification and felt impelled to deny that which they could not repress -- Freud's achievement -- by simultaneously proclaiming his personal immortality. The same danger arises again today. For with Fenichel's death, Freud has died once more. By this I do not mean to imply that Fenichel's work equals the work of Freud's genius. All of us who work in the field of psychoanalysis know that whatever we or our leading men have contributed to the progress of our science -- they were enabled to do this only because they had grown with a science which developed according to its immanent laws of growth, as fundamentally established by Freud.

With Fenichel's death we lose Freud once more. By this I mean that we lost a man who as none other among our contemporaries was the truest follower of Freud, the best representative of his teachings, and his most ardent champion

in fighting opposition based on ignorance or scientific opportunism.

Fenichel succeeded completely in bringing about within himself the synthesis between emotional and intellectual identification with Freud. One would never hear him praise Freud -- but ever so often you would hear him quote Freud, explain Freud, define Freud -- what he wrote, why and when he wrote it, just at what given time of a certain developmental phase of psychoanalysis. This referring to Freud's writings so often earned him the reputation of being an "Orthodox Freudian." If orthodoxy means having read Freud, having understood Freud, using Freud's fundamental concepts as a basis for further research, and when teaching psychoanalysis means not forgetting what you have learned from Freud -- then it is true that Fenichel was really an orthodox Freudian, this in more than one sense. Fenichel was as orthodox as Freud himself in not consenting to have anyone break psychoanalysis into pieces because some of its fragments could be used for psychotherapeutic purposes. He was as orthodox as Freud by demanding that anyone who uses part of the psychoanalytic armament should first be well acquainted with the entire body of psychoanalysis -- otherwise he would not know what he was doing to psychoanalysis and moreover, what he was doing to his patients. In the present arguments about "Psychotherapy on psychoanalytic principles" Fenichel was as orthodox as Freud. Fenichel, as well as Freud, recognized the enormous amount of neurotic misery in the world and the relative insufficiency of the basic psychoanalytic procedure in meeting the needs of

masses. After World War I, Freud appealed to the conscience of the world and called for the establishment of psychoanalytic institutes all over the world, to provide a thorough training of as many psychoanalysts as possible who should then treat people free of charge and when necessary to "alloy the gold of psychoanalysis with the copper of other psychotherapeutic procedures."

In his book on the Theory of the Neuroses, published recently, before his death, Fenichel once more appeals to the scientific conscience of the psychoanalysts who work in such institutes, by simply stating: "What is psychotherapy on psychoanalytic principles? Freud once said: 'Any treatment can be considered psychoanalysis that works by undoing resistances and interpreting transferences.'" And Fenichel continued: "That is, any method that makes the ego face its pathogenic conflicts in their full emotional value by undoing the opposing defensive forces, effective as 'resistances', through the interpretation of derivatives and especially of the derivatives expressed in the transference. This alone is the criterion."

At the end of the paragraph Fenichel dismisses the term "orthodox" -- which was so often hurled at him as a rebuke, by the simple statement: "It is meaningless to distinguish an 'orthodox' psychoanalysis from an 'unorthodox' one." This simplicity and unshaken self-reliance again reminds me of Freud, when as a college student he first came into contact with anti-Semitism. In his autobiography, Freud

records this experience by stating simply: "I was expected to feel myself inferior; I refused to do so." What Freud describes as his own personal character trait: the faculty of preserving an independent judgment even in facing an opposing compact majority -- also holds true for Otto Fenichel.

Despite the fact that Fenichel always submitted his whole life -- personal and scientific alike -- to his intellectual scrutiny, he was by no means a cold, passionless scholar. We shall never forget his temperament, the passion with which he used to propound what he had to say and to teach. I know of no other teacher who combined so well the dry way of systematized teaching with lively emotional expression. Unforgettable is his attitude in his seminars and in our scientific discussions, when he would start in a cold, systematic way to propound one by one the various points which an author had presented and then, enumerating these items -- 1, 2, 3, 4 -- -- with an increasing passion report his own opinion and observations.

It is true that he sometimes overdid a little -- but now we shall miss his overdoing, because there is no one among us so capable of understanding the weak points and gaps in a scientific presentation and at the same time so capable of encouraging scientific endeavors by productive criticism.

Today, we particularly need productive criticism from our co-workers and productive self-criticism as well,

because the barriers between psychoanalysis and the general public have broken down. The general public suffering from neurotic misery as a by-product of the war, knows about psychoanalysis and demands help from psychoanalysts. It took a second world war -- despite the endeavor of the psychoanalytic societies all over the world -- for doctors to become conscious of the fact that they need psychoanalytic training in order to meet the mental needs of their patients. Now again is the time for psychoanalysts to discern between psychoanalysis proper and the need for applying psychoanalytic principles to the various kinds of treatments.

Here again Fenichel stands in the foreground, as I mentioned before, of those whose difficult task it is to meet our social obligations but at the same time to protect the scientific progress of psychoanalysis. In doing so, Fenichel remained loyal to himself -- that was the way he started his psychoanalytic career and the way he ended it.

When, following the first world war, men were in need of finding a way out of their mental confusion, psychoanalysis was not known enough as a treatment for the sick. At that time only the philosophers grasped at psychoanalysis and wanted to use some of its doctrines for metaphysical principles. Fenichel, still a student of psychoanalysis, published a paper against the misuse of psychoanalytic metapsychology for metaphysics.

Since World War I, psychoanalysis has grown, as a science and as a therapy, and is no longer represented by a few prominent psychoanalysts. It is now cultivated and administered by organizations. It is only human that within these organizations differences arise as to theories and practice of psychoanalysis. It was here that Fenichel showed a weakness which was the direct outcome of his strength. Fenichel was not an organization man. It was sometimes difficult to work with him on matters of society administration. He disliked anything that even smelled of diplomacy. He was motivated in his attitudes during the various phases of the psychoanalytic movement only by his scientific conviction and could become impatient with colleagues who found it necessary to safeguard psychoanalysis by temporarily focusing their concern on the movement which carries psychoanalysis rather than on psychoanalysis proper.

Fenichel, as I said, was sometimes difficult to deal with in matters of the psychoanalytic organization, but I must admit I personally shall miss very much his "being difficult." Such a "difficult" man, who cannot concern himself with diplomacy, is needed by those who must navigate the psychoanalytic course against recurring tides of resistance, because to them he is like a lighthouse which remains unshaken and rigidly sends out its orienting beacon, unperturbed by the direction of the winds storming around it.

Fenichel himself was not at all rigid -- he was a man with good object relationships -- he had a great capacity for love; he loved people, he loved nature, he loved the arts, particularly poetry and, above all, he loved his science -- psychoanalysis. It was characteristic of his searching mind that he not only felt, but had to know, what he loved. For instance, his love of nature expressed itself in his expert knowledge of geography -- he loved California, his new homeland -- he traveled whenever he could and knew everything there was to know about the mountains, the ocean and the desert. His love of nature made him also an expert in zoology.

Fenichel loved jokes -- he was a master at telling jokes and enjoyed listening to them. We all remember his hearty, infectious laugh -- the whole-hearted laughter that combined the kind-heartedness of a child's mind with the intellect of a scholar. Beyond the propensity for wit, he possessed humor. Humor, as you know, is weltanschauung and reflects a good relationship between a strong ego and its super-ego. Humor is the optimism of the independent character, which enables one to see his way through even the most difficult situations. As an example of Fenichel's humor, let me tell you a little story.

The Prague Psychoanalytic Study Group was founded by Frances Deri, as a branch of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society. There the Prague psychoanalysts, trained by Mrs. Deri, met with psychoanalysts who had left Vienna. When

Mrs. Deri left for Los Angeles, at my invitation, Fenichel took over the chairmanship of the group. At one of their meetings, Dr. Hanna Heilborn -- today Mrs. Otto Fenichel -- was scheduled to give a paper.

It happened that this meeting came on the same day on which Hitler invaded Vienna -- the members of the group were very alarmed, stayed close to their radio and telephone, worrying about what would happen to their friends, to Freud and to psychoanalysis -- no one was in the mood for a scientific discussion. Finally Fenichel resumed his chairmanship and said: "Let me tell you a story. Some years ago my father was very much upset by news that a close relative was in danger. He received the message just before dinner; he was depressed and refused to eat, in spite of my mother's urging. When my mother persisted that he eat, he finally asked: 'What is there for dinner?' She answered: 'Geduenstetes' -- pot roast -- this answer produced a smile on my father's face and he said: 'Geduenstetes -- pot roast -- this you can eat in every life situation.'"

The members laughed and Fenichel then continued: "As it is with pot roast, so it is with psychoanalysis -- psychoanalysis you can occupy yourselves with in every life situation." And Dr. Hanna Heilborn gave her paper.

This attitude typifies Fenichel's relationship to psychoanalysis -- psychoanalysis in all life situations and for all life situations; to him, psychoanalysis was not just a specialized branch of psychiatry -- psychoanalysis to him was the all-comprehending science of human interrelationships. Therefore his great anxiety was that, because of the enormous present need for psychotherapeutic help, psychoanalysis could be forgotten as the science of nature -- as the basic psychology needed in pedagogy, criminology, anthropology and sociology -- this accounts for his never-ending zest to preserve the right to train non-medical scientists in psychoanalysis.

In order that you may understand Fenichel's unflinching devotion to psychoanalysis, let me review briefly his scientific career. When Fenichel graduated from high school, his original intention was to study biology, this with the view in mind of understanding the physiological correlate of the human mind, for Fenichel had already read some of Freud's writings in his teens. His father objected to such a mere scientific profession because he wanted his son to choose a profession from which he would make a living. Thus Fenichel chose medicine, with the definite intention of considering this as a bridge leading to psychoanalysis.

As a student, he was active in the youth movement in Austria. Here already we see Fenichel presenting papers before his group -- he spoke about sexual enlightenment, about principles of sexual ethics, about problems of sexuality in the youth movement. We see him also, as early as 1918, then

twenty-one years old, as guest speaker of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, giving a paper "On a Derivative of the Incest Conflict." Fenichel evidenced his basic tendency to gain an all-comprehending understanding of man by studying sociology and philosophy -- besides medicine.

In 1922, he moved to Berlin, in order to complete his psychoanalytic training at the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute, which was then the only psychoanalytic institute in existence. Concomitantly he furthered his training in psychiatry and neurology, by working with Bonhoeffer and Cassierer. At the Berlin Institute Fenichel very soon proved to be not only a student but an original contributor to theoretical and clinical psychoanalysis. At that time he gave papers, e.g., on "Psychoanalysis and Metaphysics," "The Libido Development as Reflected in Dreams," and others. He also gave a paper about the then "recent attitude of Psychiatry to Psychoanalysis."

From 1924 on, Fenichel started to present and publish many papers which established his reputation in theoretical as well as in clinical psychoanalysis. Fenichel left Berlin in 1933 when the Hitler regime made psychoanalytic work impossible. Up to that time, he had read 108 papers and had published 34 of these. Let me mention only a few:

1. The Clinical Aspect of the Need for Punishment.
2. The Pregenital Antecedents of the Oedipus Complex.
3. The Psychology of Transvestitism
4. About Introjection and Castration Complex.
5. On Identification.
6. On the Defense Mechanisms of Isolation.
7. Organ Libidinal Manifestations Associated with Instinct Defenses

In 1924 Fenichel joined the teaching staff of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute -- he was then twenty-six years old. The official report of his appointment as instructor referred to him as "The Dr. Fenichel, already well-known in wider circles." This was the beginning of his career as that teacher of psychoanalysis who will remain unforgettable in our memories, and whom it will be almost impossible to replace. To his zest of teaching, he referred as his "teaching libido." He loved to teach, because he loved psychoanalysis and because he was aware of the enormous responsibility a teacher has for the future of psychoanalysis, for the future of human psychology. Training a new generation of psychoanalysts was his most important life task -- he knew that his students had to grasp not only the letters but also the spirit of Freud, and that in order to grasp Freud's spirit, he had to teach them the letters first.

Among the lectures and seminars Fenichel gave in Berlin was one which -- although the students attending were very enthusiastic -- temporarily did not find approval by the directors of the Institute. It seemed to us that Fenichel devoted too many evenings to the discussion of the relation of psychoanalysis to sociology and Marxism, instead of confining it to discussions on psychoanalytic matters. Fenichel did not yield to his "superiors" -- his reaction was: "What of it? If you don't like how we do it -- let's be naughty children." From then on this seminar became famous under the official title, "The Children's Seminar." It was in this "Children's Seminar" that Fenichel gave his last paper before he left

National Socialistic Germany -- the title was: "Psychoanalysis, Socialism and our Task for the Future." His own task was clearly defined -- his sole aim was to remain the custodian of psychoanalysis, to see to it that psychoanalysis should not perish in the catastrophic events to come.

At the invitation of the Norwegian psychoanalysts, he migrated to Oslo, where he taught psychoanalysis for two years -- during this time he also visited other psychoanalytic centers, Vienna, Copenhagen, Budapest, Amsterdam, the Hague, Bern and Zurich, to keep up personal contacts with other psychoanalysts, there teaching on the therapy and theory of the neuroses and presenting original scientific papers. It was during this period that he published his important papers on "The Phallic Girl" and "The Instinct to Amass Wealth" and also his critical essay on Freud's theory about "The Death Instinct."

In 1936, he moved to Prague, taking over the chairmanship of that study group from Frances Deri. Here Fenichel finished the work begun by Frances Deri, the translation of Freud's papers into Czech. His two years' stay in Prague were very productive, both in teaching and in research. During this time he gave his papers on "Triumph and Trophee" -- and on the characterological phenomenon first described by him: "The Counterphobic Attitude." When in the beginning of 1938, we heard that Prague was threatened by the Nazi invasion, and we knew that Fenichel had to leave, we seized the opportunity to bring him to California, to help us with psychoanalytic teaching and training here.

And so on June 24, 1938 he appeared for the first time before the Psychoanalytic Study Group, presenting a paper

on "Ego Weakness and Ego Strength," a topic so important for the dynamics of the neuroses. We hardly need a reminder of Fenichel's work in our midst. His papers and discussions in Los Angeles and San Francisco, his lectures and seminars contributed decisively to giving California its reputation as one of the best and -- I say this with pride -- most orthodox centers for psychoanalytic thinking and training.

Since America was the only country untouched by the world holocaust, Fenichel was particularly happy here, not only because here he could live a peaceful existence, but much more because in America psychoanalysis was free from persecution and thus became a part of his greater fatherland, psychoanalysis. After five years of migration he was home again. Knowing Fenichel's character, it was not surprising to find him sometimes impatient with new and old compatriots who hampered psychoanalytic progress here by creating an issue on basic principles where there was none -- e.g., the pseudo-issue: biology versus sociology in the basic psychoanalytic concept. Fenichel as a researcher had brought about in himself the complete synthesis between the biologist and sociologist; therefore it was difficult for him to understand how it could be that others didn't see things as he did.

In his last book, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of the Neuroses*, his last opportunity to talk to us, once more he states clearly -- "Scientific psychology explains mental phenomena as the result of the interplay of primitive physical needs, rooted in the biological structure of man -- -- and the

influence of the environment on these needs As to the influences of the surroundings, these must be studied in detail, in their practical reality. There is no psychology of man in a vacuum -- -- only a psychology of man in a certain concrete society and in a certain social place within this concrete society."

Tonight there is no time to evaluate in detail the scientific significance of all of Fenichel's contributions to psychoanalysis. He has given more than two hundred papers in his scientific career and left 72 publications -- I didn't undertake to count his innumerable book reviews. To study Fenichel's writings and to incorporate his findings into our psychoanalytic theory and technique, gives work to the literature seminars of all psychoanalytic societies for many years to come.

Now we must reconcile ourselves to the reality that Fenichel, the man, is no longer with us. But, as I said in the beginning, we need not lose him if we identify with him. So that a conscious identification is possible, let us visualize once more what Fenichel was and what we should be -- I know of no better way to do this than by quoting his own words, from his very first paper to be published, on "Psychoanalysis and Metaphysics." There he said about psychoanalytic scientists: "We are neither infants nor schizophrenics nor animistic occultists -- nor are we mystical enthusiasts -- we are logicians who, through a hard fight, have created a

new criterion, that of consciously testing reality. This criterion imposes suffering upon us because we must renounce pleasure. But with the task before us we gain a new ethics which means even greater pleasure than that which we had to renounce. Our task is: to decide what is reality and what is not reality, only in accordance with our insight, and to adhere to our decision as long as the causes exist which gave us the new knowledge. The intellectual experience of logical thinking does not necessarily imply cold-soberness -- it can provide a deeper elation than the all-too-shallow emotion which the individual might experience when viewing the scenery from a mountain peak without thinking. One can carry the intellect everywhere -- if the intellect is not inclined to shy away from phenomena which at first sight seem beyond intellectual comprehension -- this implies more sincere and more passionate struggle with oneself than to him who, without doubting and too easily, trusts merely to his intuition. The virtue of logic is the virtue of the adult who has conquered the pleasure principle. This is the virtue which Nietzsche has called 'the youngest of all virtues, named integrity.'

And so, let us conclude: we keep Otto Fenichel alive in ourselves if we adopt his virtue -- which directed his whole being -- his feeling, his thinking, his working -- passionate integrity.