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INTERVIEW WITH DR. ALBERT MASON

by F. Robert Rodman, M.D.

INTRODUCTION

For the past fifteen years, Albert Mason has represented Melanie Klein's point of view in our community. His conspicuous and articulate presentations have aroused an array of emotions which range from deep admiration and respect to violent antipathy. Previously joined by Drs. Wilfred Bion and Susanna Isaacs Elmhirst, in the long cultural and geographic journey from London to Los Angeles, he is with Dr. Bion's passing, and Dr. Elmhirst's return to London, now alone. During the current period of lessened strife in the Institute, when theoretical variety seems to have dispersed, or at least replaced, the severe polar tensions of the seventies, he continues to make his views known, to groups and individuals, with considerable impact. Whether his audiences agree or disagree with him, he provides for all the heuristic challenge of a distinct and complex standpoint, against which other views may be pitted. The interview was conducted in Dr. Mason's comfortable office in Beverly Hills. At leisure that week, he appeared in sweater and slacks, so different from the impeccable suits and white shirts which are his usual professional dress. Eager, enthusiastic, good-humored, he seemed willing to pursue virtually any subject.

RODMAN:

Could we start by talking about your move from London to Los Angeles. Whatever you feel is relevant.

MASON:

Firstly, I am an American. My parents came to America in about 1923, and I was born in Newark, New Jersey, in 1926. But my mother got ill. She was operated on when I was seven months in utero for abdominal pains, in America, and they removed an appendix which was obviously normal because a few years later, in England, they found some gallstones which she used to carry around in a bag with her to show me, which must have been the original pains that she had and they didn't find at the first operation. But they told her she was homesick, and that she missed her father, and that was why she was having these pains. So she decided she would go back to England when I was a year and a half old, taking me and a brother and sister with her. And, although I don't remember it, except there's a couple of vague screen memories of the actual trip, it was a very rough trip, as she was ill all of the time and was in a sick bay. I was looked after by my sister. This

may all sound circumstantial, but it's a very important part of the story. So there I was, a year and a half, left in charge of my sister and younger brother (my sister was about 8 or 9). My father remained in America because he was an illegal immigrant. He had jumped boat as a stoker, because he had no passport, was a Russian immigrant, and he couldn't get back with them and had to wait for a suitable passage back, which took him about a year.

As it was reconstructed in my analysis, I was very happy for the first year and a half of my life. My parents were together, my family was together, and then there was a break. My mother then went into hospital. I didn't see her for some time and was looked after by neighbors. So there was a lot of chaos in my life following the leaving of America. This played a very important part in my wanting to return, always, to the place where some peace or happiness was. That was the background.

In wartime, I was almost sent back when all the children were evacuated from London. I was put on a list, and we were lined up ready to go on the boat. But there was a sinking of a boat the week before, and that meant they cancelled all evacuations. I had about 100 relatives in Cleveland, Ohio, who sent us parcels during the war. So somehow America became the haven or the place where things came from, and certainly the place where I had a united family in my early life.

I came here for a trip in about '66. We met quite a few analysts and some other people, and had a happy time. But I didn't have any thoughts of moving here. And then, of course, I think Brandchaft was the original — and there were, I think, Bail and Grotstein — who were very interested in the Object Relations school. They imported Rosenfeld and Segal, Thorner, Betty Joseph, to come and lecture, and later, Bion, and got very intrigued by the work that was going on and decided they would try to get a British analyst to come to do some teaching, or some re-analysis, because quite a few of them were not satisfied with their previous analytic experiences, I suppose. And to everybody's surprise, Bion, at the age of 70, thought it would be fun. He too had spent his childhood in a hot country (India) that he had very good memories of when his family was together — isn't that interesting — before he was sent to boarding school in England at the age of 7 and his family was split after that. He hated administration and politics, loved analysis, and loved writing. I think he was very glad of the opportunity to get out of all his duties, and to spend his last years working and writing. And when the opportunity came, and he came over here, he liked the feel, he liked the people who were interesting him in going, and he decided he would go. The same people asked me if I would like to come. I spoke to Bion about it, and asked him what he thought. He said, "It would be a great help to me if you decided you wanted to come too, because I'm 70, I could die any minute, and it would be nice to know there was someone there who could take over some of that work if it occurred. And in any case, if I'm going to re-analyze people and they want some supervision, I can't do it and you would be very useful." That was very thrilling, because he was a

hero of mine. He was my first supervisor. But he was also more than that. He was a very important figure to all of us in the British Institute, even the people who weren't Kleinian. He was a man of great wisdom and tolerance and strength. And somehow the idea of going with him, and going back to my phantasy home, was very intriguing to me. I discussed it with my British colleagues, with Rosenfeld and Meltzer, with Segal of course. Some were very much against my going.

RODMAN:

Why?

MASON:

Well, Meltzer was an instructor and a good friend of mine. He said, "You'll just be cut to pieces there. As a Kleinian, you won't survive." And he was angry with Bion for deserting the movement. He always wanted to have some more analysis with Bion, because Melanie Klein died in the fifth year of his analysis, Meltzer, so he felt he needed a bit more. He was very peeved by it, and I think Rosenfeld was a bit peeved too. I had had a lot of training with Rosenfeld and Meltzer, and I had a feeling for the analysis of psychosis. Rosenfeld had done a lot with me and I think he felt kind of let down in some way, vaguely. Meltzer hated me going. Segal said, "Great idea, why not go. If you don't like it and things don't go well, you can come back. You have to go for five years; you can't undertake analysis if you go for less. But say you're going for five years and see what happens." And I thought that was right. So that's what I did. Money-Kyrle, who was over 70 at the time, said he'd love to go but felt too old.

My wife, of course, naturally played a large part in the decision. She is very adventurous. She left Switzerland when she was 18 or 19 to go and live in Paris because she felt she could make more progress there. Then she left Paris to go and live in London. So she is sort of a world citizen. She loved America and thought, yes, it would be an adventure — she'd spent 20 years in England, something like that — she thought, well let's go, it would be fun. So we thought it would be fun, kind of.

RODMAN:

You say that with such irony —

MASON:

Well, but primarily that was the feeling. It was an adventure. And you see, it wasn't a question of me in any way feeling that I wasn't doing well in London. I had a very well established practice, both in psychiatry and then in psychoanalysis. We lived in a very beautiful place in London. And we loved our life. We loved Europe. I don't know. It was the idea, I think, that we were going to contribute, maybe, to something which we believed in. I've always loved analysis, and I felt that the work of Mrs. Klein was a real

contribution. I was very thrilled that people were interested in it and surprised that it was so little known.

RODMAN:

But did you have any concern about the climate that you might come into? There was no idea that there would be opposition?

MASON:

Meltzer suggested there would be, and I kind of thought that, well, you know, I've been here and I've met some extraordinarily nice people. And I thought there might be disagreement, yes, but not a real feeling of hatred or intolerance — otherwise I certainly wouldn't have dreamed of coming.

RODMAN:

When did you come?

MASON:

I came in 1968.

RODMAN:

There were changes going on in the Institute at that point. It was an unstable time.

MASON:

Apparently.

RODMAN:

I had left for the Army in 1966. When I came back in 1968 the place had changed tremendously. The advent of the Kleinian group became part of the change — the worldwide social upheavals of the sixties seemed to have caught up with us.

MASON:

I just felt I'd go along and I would start a practice and do some teaching of the work that I knew. I was invited onto the faculty at USC, where I've been ever since. I seemed welcome at the Institute. There was a friendly atmosphere there. I was asked to teach on the faculty almost from the start. And after about a year or two Art Malin called me up and asked, "Would you like to give a course on Mrs. Klein at the Institute?" I was thrilled. What happened is difficult to understand. I think that, like any new idea, it got idealized, and a group of people maybe felt that it was the answer. I mean, did they see something in it more than it was? Because all it is is psychoanalysis, and psychoanalysis is just psychoanalysis. It's always hard. It's always long. It's always uncertain. But it did seem to explain certain things, or help in certain areas, particularly the analysis of the borderline and the psychotic, which hadn't been so easy to understand before. A lot of

young people came. Maybe that was one of the big mistakes. Students who were still in analysis probably used differences in technique to bolster their analytic resistances like splitting of the parents.

RODMAN:

You think that might have been a mistake?

MASON:

Yes, I think so. Looking back. I think that it would have been better to have stayed away from the younger people until they had a more basic training. See, in England, one splits into the groups right from the beginning, although all of them have to have basic exposure. And it didn't seem strange to me that they should be coming and listening to a Kleinian point of view, because that's exactly what I did. But there was a background in England which there wasn't here, and clearly, some people felt angry. They felt maybe that one had walked into a position, invaded it, or they felt frightened — I don't know.

RODMAN:

But you then gradually became a focus for latent conflict in a wide variety of people in the community.

MASON:

That's what the American said, that the Klein phenomenon was only one part of what was going here, which was a sort of personality conflict which had been simmering for some time.

RODMAN:

Do you think there's anything in the Kleinian methods or techniques that contributes to mobilizing that sort of conflict? Are there differences among theories in what conflicts they can stimulate in a group?

MASON:

I've never thought of that. I wouldn't have thought so. I would have thought it was more the personalities, because when I sit and talk about Mrs. Klein's work to people who are wanting to listen to ideas and theory, I will get disagreement, but never the kind of situation where one's told that this isn't psychoanalysis.

RODMAN:

Let me pursue it a little bit more specifically. I have the impression that some of the Kleinian ideas can be used by certain people for the purpose of expressing a kind of omnipotence. It takes this form, that one can simply listen to a stream of associations and have an almost instantaneous and profound understanding. Such people present themselves as if they know more than they can possibly know. And then this brings forth powerful

reactions from other people and the next thing you know you have a conflagration.

MASON:

You know, I don't understand that. I know what you're saying, because of all people, Mrs. Klein was such a stickler for tracing omnipotence. This was one of the big things! And I've never had anybody say to me, when I've presented work, that they thought that any interpretations I made were off the wall or were not grounded in my observation of the material at that moment. Willie Hoffer once said to me — he was a classical Anna Freudian, one of her staunchest admirers — "I'm a sharpshooter. I wait. I listen. I listen. And then, I go 'bing'." Now, I understand that technique, where you wait and wait, and sometimes ½ or ¾ of the session, maybe the whole session, will go by before anything is said. A colleague of mine came from London a few weeks ago who was analysed by Klauber, who was a staunch Freudian. And she said sometimes three sessions would go by and he wouldn't say anything. Now, that's obviously one way. What the Kleinian school tends to do is to make what Bion called sighting shots, to use a Naval term, where you send something out and see where it lands, and by the reaction, or by where it lands, make another shot which follows that in a modified direction, and you approach by a series of probing ideas. So, we are a bit more active in the sense that we say more, but we don't make interpretations more. We're, I think, searching, and picking up the reaction to the interpretation as being as important as the interpretation itself. I think it may look a bit wild unless you realize that it is an exploration, that it's a more active technique.

RODMAN:

I would like to turn to something about how you got interested in analysis. You were a hypnotist first, weren't you?

MASON:

I actually began as an anesthetist and was just at the point of moving into becoming a private practitioner in anesthesia when I got very interested in delivering babies without anesthesia because I saw the respiratory depression in the neonate causing trouble and causing some deaths. So obviously if you can produce anesthesia without introducing chemicals, and you know locals are not easy to give, it would be useful. So I became interested in hypnosis as a method of delivering babies, as an anesthetist. I had some success with it. If you're working in a big hospital hypnotizing people, people will send patients to you for this or that. I had a clinic where I would hypnotize cases referred to me from the rest of the hospital — intractable pains and things like that. One of the things I was very good at was the treatment of warts. I had a very famous rugby player come to me who was covered in warts. He had thousands. Couldn't play. I cured him, and that was very heady wine. You can imagine — national rugby player.

Then there was a young boy who was covered, apart from his face, from head to foot, with millions and millions of warts. Totally. A surgeon was trying to graft skin on his hands. I said to the surgeon, you know, when he was being anesthetized, "Why don't you treat him with hypnosis?" So the surgeon turned around and looked at me with a sour look on his face and said, "Why don't you?" I said, "Be happy to." So he walked out of the theater and left me with this case. I took this boy, and I hypnotized him. I said, "Mr. Moore told me to take over your treatment. I've seen quite a few people like you. I'm going to treat you by hypnosis." He was 15 years old. He said, "OK." So I hypnotized him, and told him the warts would go off his right arm, and to come back in a week. He came back in a week and they were gone. I took him around to the theater where Mr. Moore was operating and I held up his two arms like this. One was covered in thick black warts and the other ----. And Moore's jaw dropped open. He came around and he looked at it. I said, "I told you--" He said, "Do you know what you've done? Do you know what this case is? It's Congenital Icthyosiform Erythrodermia of Brocque. It's organic, it's congenital. Now, be prepared to present him in the Royal Society of Medicine tomorrow." I went and looked it up and I was staggered. I had no idea. I presented this case to the Royal Society of Medicine, where they were staggered, and I published it in the *British Medical Journal.* When I published it, every newspaper in the world ran an article on it, including *Time Magazine.* I was interviewed. I was on television. Thousands of letters poured in from all over the world. And I was a celebrity. It was very upsetting, as you can imagine. Because every incurable case around came to me. It attracted the attention of some very prestigious hospitals and doctors, who offered me a research scholarship to pursue the work in their hospitals. And that was the turning point in my life. So I gave up anesthesia at that point and decided to do research into hypnotism, which I did for some years. At the same time I took a training in psychiatry because I realized that I had to try and understand what was going on. And of course, as I got into it, I began to understand that I knew nothing and that psychiatry taught me nothing. And the only way to go was to understand psychoanalysis, the unconscious, because now things were pouring out of people's unconscious. I was hypnotizing, asking them questions, and I was being flooded. I knew nothing about the unconscious. So I went for a training at the British Institute of Psychoanalysis. There I learned that my whole unconscious motivation was linked to my early life.

When I came back from America, I grew up in the east end of London, and the doctor in the east end that we went to was a mission doctor, who treated you for free with the idea that they would try to convert you to Christianity at the same time. The mission doctor was an extraordinarily impressive man. He wore a top hat and came in a horse carriage to visit my mother when she was ill. I remember looking through the keyhole as he went into the bedroom with my mother and took her clothes off! After that there was nothing I could be but a doctor. There was that magical man with all this wonderful kind of omnipotence of God and medicine, which was very

attractive to me, especially the idea that you could get women under your power like your mother, you see. There was also the fact that I lost a sister when she was very young — she was in an incubator and died shortly after birth — and that must have stimulated, unconsciously, my wish to investigate the delivery of babies. You see, that was part of it. So there was the very omnipotent view of the doctor. There was this wonderful picture of Charcot, hypnotizing a pretty girl that I remember seeing in a frontispiece of a Freud book when I was about 13.

RODMAN:

You read Freud at 13?

MASON:

I read it for the sex. Freud died in '39 in London, so it was just around about that time. But, I read it because it was all about sex. We would read these things in the library which was the only place we went in the evenings.

RODMAN:

Do you think there is any connection between this omnipotent side of you and your career as a Kleinian?

MASON:

Let me tell you how I became a Kleinian. I was so naive when I did psychoanalysis because I didn't go to it like most people do. They become a psychiatrist by choice. I became a psychiatrist by accident. Through hypnosis. And when I was flooded with all this stuff, I decided that I would go. And I knew nothing about Mrs. Klein, nothing about Anna Freud and the schools. I went to the British Institute and applied. Winnicott said, "Which group do you want to go into? There's the A group, the B group, and the middle group." So I said, "Well I don't know the differences." He said, "You'll go in the middle group." I said, "Fine." Then he said, "Do you have any choice of an analyst?" I said, "No, I'll take whatever analyst I get. I'll start whenever there's a vacancy." You were assigned to the middle group if you had no choice. That was the classical Freudian as distinct from the A, which was the Kleinian, and the B, which was the Anna Freud. I then discussed it with a poker playing friend of mine who had taken up psychiatry. He was at that time applying to the Institute. I said, "I've just applied." He said, "Which group are you going in?" I said, "The middle group." So he said, "Why did you choose the middle group?" I said, "Well, because that was the group that he assigned me to. What's the difference?" He said, "Well look, the Kleinian group do all the same work as the middle group, but they do a bit more too, because they add the early infantile discoveries to the classical Freudian. So you get more." I said, "Oh, if you get more, then I'll go to the Kleinian." So it was purely the idea that I would get more. I called up Winnicott and I said, "Can I change my mind about which

group?" He said, "Of course." I said, "I'd like to go into the Kleinian group." He said, "Can you tell me why you changed your mind?" I said, "Yes. My friend said the Kleinians give you more." Winnicott said, "Well, I see." And that was the reason I was put into the Kleinian group. I didn't select an analyst, and took the first analyst that came up on rotation, which was Hanna Segal.

RODMAN:

And the rest is history.

MASON:

That's right. I had no idea. It wasn't because they were more omnipotent. But I certainly was. And of course my omnipotence was very severely battered, particularly in my use of hypnosis, which was all very much connected to omnipotent fantasies that I had, fostering omnipotent fantasies that patients had, and I continued doing hypnosis for about a year into my analytic training, gradually understanding what I was doing, and still feeling that it was OK because I was fostering a positive transference, and I felt that that was OK if patients couldn't have anything better. So I continued that for a bit, until one day I realized something else. That I wasn't just fostering positive transference. I was frightening people, and they were acceding to my wishes out of terror. I had never seen that aspect of hypnosis before until it had got analysed, and I dropped it like a hot brick after that because I couldn't bear the thought that patients were terrified of me. I didn't mind them loving me, but the idea that they were terrified of me was more than I could bear. When you can do analysis, you've got some way of understanding that, and also of understanding what good you do the patients when they're not making wives a terrifying object, or their mothers, or their children. And you can then bear it.

RODMAN:

It's part of what you're paid for, to bear that burden.

MASON:

Absolutely. That's why I believe so many people find themselves having sex with their patients or make positive efforts to empathize, because they couldn't bear to be the patient's bad object. It is part of a placation of the patient, or going along with them, or giving in to them.

RODMAN:

Could we talk a little about something you said in your discussion at the Institute of Arnold Rothstein's paper on humiliation? You were talking about the analyst's confrontation with two sides of things, the intrapsychic thing and the, shall we say, real thing, the external thing. As a Kleinian, you represented one pole of emphasis and he was seen as representing the other, and both, as you said, play a role. You can't do analysis unless you

insist on the primacy of emotional reality. But then you have this problem. If that's all there is to it, then you have a kind of schizoid version of experience. Yet, if you play up the actual events as causative elements, you have emptied psychoanalysis of most of its power to evoke transformations.

MASON:

I agree, and the only real anchor is to understand what goes on now. That's what's alive. That's what you deal with, and then what's interesting is to see how the recollection of the past changes.

RODMAN:

After you've done the analytic work.

MASON:

Right.

RODMAN:

Let me ask you whether, when you arrived here, you discovered something like what you felt Dr. Rothstein presented you with; that is to say, a kind of analysis that inadequately emphasized what the patients brought from the past to their current experience.

MASON:

That is how it seemed to be. That's why what Rothstein said surprised me. He was saying that the emphasis was being put on the intrapsychic and not external reality. I found that most of the people who brought work to be supervised were getting caught in external reality. There was a lot of acknowledgement of external reality, which we all tend to do, but there was a neglect, for example, of the idea that the analyst's interpretation could be responded to as food for thought, and the patient's response to the interpretation could give you an understanding of early feeding disorder, you know. The patient might take it in greedily, or spit it out, or hold onto it concretely like a constipated stool. That these processes here and now were a representation of a feeding disorder — were frequently neglected. People were very good at understanding content, but those details of processes which I had been taught to observe so minutely and treat like diseases, i.e. full of latent phantasy content, didn't seem to me to be getting the same emphasis here. I think a lot of people found it valuable to have their attention drawn to these details, and add them to what they were very good at, which was dealing, I think, with reality, which I wasn't so well versed in, if you like.

RODMAN:

Were you affected by their orientation to external reality? You sound as if you were.

MASON:

In the discussion of Rothstein's paper, I was trying to say to him that I felt, of course, one always had to acknowledge that what the container did, how the container behaves in the present, and did in the past, must make a difference. If the container squeezes the patient too tightly, produces a claustrophobia, that's going to affect him. If the container is too loose and allows no structure, that's going to affect him. I always was very insistent that how the mother was, and how she behaved to the child, made a difference.

RODMAN:

Mrs. Klein is generally thought to have believed that the baby virtually invented the mother. That the real mother was hardly important. That the world in which the baby lived, and consequently the world in which the analysis lives, is a wholly invented world. That doesn't bring in this note of reality.

MASON:

She always pays great attention to the external reality. But what had been neglected was in fact that a baby can make the worst of a good mother and the best of a bad mother, and that that part needed to be fleshed out more, taking the other for granted. So I think it's a question of misunderstanding. Just as she drew our attention to the vicissitudes of hate, this didn't mean that she wasn't aware of the positive transference and of libido and love. But naturally, when you draw attention to something that you find is new, people will say, oh well, that's all she says. I don't think so. I think she just added to what was there, and acknowledged most of what was there.

RODMAN:

Did you have supervision with her?

MASON:

No. She died in 1960, and I graduated in '63. So I was a student just after she died. I heard one lecture of hers, and that was all.

RODMAN:

What was your impression? What do you remember?

MASON:

Well, what I remember was, she gave a lecture on loneliness, and she was asked a question by Joseph Sandler. She listened carefully and then corrected the question he asked.

She said, "I think what you really mean to ask is this." And he said, oh yes. And she then answered the question she had corrected, acknowledging what

Freud had in fact described, and that she was merely adding something to it. She always paid great deference to Freud.

RODMAN:

I've often wondered about the possible connection between her writings on the subject of gratitude and the situation which was observable here, where there was such a violent response to the Kleinians. What could have been evoked via the theory itself, or the uses to which it was put? Perhaps there was a conscious tendency in the Kleinian group to arouse envy.

MASON:

Well you know what she said. She said, you can't feel gratitude if you have too much envy. Because the envy prevents you from feeling you're getting something good. And gratitude is a response to a feeling you've got something good. So if you're attacking something, then it doesn't feel good to you, and therefore you don't feel the need to be grateful.

RODMAN:

So what are you saying, more explicitly?

MASON:

I'm saying what she said.

RODMAN:

You mean among the group that you encountered here, that their attacks prevented them from feeling grateful for what was being contributed?

MASON:

I imagine that must be — if we're taking Kleinian reasoning. I would think then another reason, which is absolutely classically Freudian, that is to take it one stage later, that Laius did feel threatened by being invaded by a new generation, and felt it would take away from his position (wife and kingdom) and therefore had to murder the new generation called Oedipus. And I think we all have a Laius inside that tries to stifle Oedipus. And poor old Oedipus, all he did was defend himself against a murderous parent. That was the other point I made about the external environment. If you have a murderous parent, to become a murderer is necessary to survive. So I think that those that feel that something new overthrows the old will be hostile. Those who feel that the new son comes and adds to the family and enriches the family, stands on the shoulders of the father, welcome this. I think that we got mixed reactions.

RODMAN:

Let me ask about the parallel training program, that is, the Kleinian seminars that took place outside the umbrella of the Institute. This was a

specific phenomenon that grew out of the situation, no doubt, and also called forth reactions to itself.

MASON:

It's something I've never understood myself, because there were many other people who were giving private seminars, Kleinian and not Kleinian, and when asked to give a Kleinian seminar, it never occurred to me not to give it. But the seminars I gave mostly were for analysts, and some of the people who were not in the psychiatric community. But when asked to give seminars, I gave them freely and I welcomed giving them. I don't think I have ever refused — no, stronger — never, ever refused an offer to give a seminar, to give a lecture, or a discussion at our Institute. I've accepted every one without question. You mention the discussion with Rothstein the other night. I think I was about the fourth person asked to do the discussion. I accepted without even reading the paper, because I felt that if someone does me the honor of wanting to hear me, I'd be very happy to say what I know. So I didn't understand that, and I think it was the same with Bion.

RODMAN:

But you're, of course, fully aware that people began to feel that there was a kind of shadow training program that was going on during certain years, that was training people to be Kleinian analysts outside the auspices of the Institute, and that it was like an invasive presence that was vitiating the influence of the Institute. You know that that took place.

MASON:

And of course, as I said, I don't really understand why. Whatever I was asked to do in the Institute, I did, and people asked me — it seemed that if I did it, it was called shadow Institute, whereas other people giving such seminars were quite acceptable. Are the Kohutians running a shadow training program now? Or the analysts training child psychotherapists?

RODMAN:

There were certain people, too, that began to appear, who were not analytically trained, at least in accordance with the usual rules, but who turned up discussing things in public forums, as if they were analysts. And on the subject of crossing traditional analytic barriers, I also wanted to ask whether you knew that Mrs. Klein wanted Winnicott to analyze her son under her supervision. He refused.

MASON:

That surprises me, to be so intolerant of what everybody would recognize as good analytical practice on his part. I can find no defense for that.

Winnicott had a lot of obvious ambivalence, but he never really, to my knowledge, said anything detrimental. He was a great diplomat. He was always very friendly to the Kleinian movement, and took his own position, had his own following. And I must say, I have nothing but good memories of him.

RODMAN:

I'm interested to know whether there's a Kleinian feeling that those who do not understand and practice according to the Kleinian view are doing analysis which is so seriously deficient that, it could be profoundly questioned as a valid procedure. I'm asking about your deepest convictions.

MASON:

I believe that if somebody does what I would recognize as analysis, I wouldn't care whether he had no analytic training whatsoever, though I doubt whether he'd be any good. I want to make that point so much that I'll go that far. That whether he calls himself a Jungian or an Adlerian, if he is examining the interpersonal relationship between the patient and himself, and illuminating that, from another point of view than the patient holds, which I would call unconscious, I think that it will always help and should be called analysis. Now, obviously I think that we perhaps illuminate certain areas better than others. Take the Oedipal situation. I believe that the classical analyst will emphasize the child's jealousy of the parent — the triangular conflict. As a Kleinian I would certainly do the same but would also focus on the envy in the situation and look for evidence of the hatred and murderousness due to that alone, as distinct from the jealousy, for the interpretations and vicissitudes of these conflicts are quite distinct.

I believe this enriches the whole experience but I have to add that if for example a Freudian is analyzing lets say penis envy and is picking this up in the transference, i.e. the patient is attacking the analyst for the possession of an organ the patient doesn't have and moreover needs in some way, a thorough analysis of this process would also affect the patient's envious response to feeding which the Kleinian might emphasize and work at. Envy is envy and if you analyze it in response to your looks or your penis and I to my breast or my brain we are doing essentially the same even though we are working at different levels and with different genetic experiences. If the envy began with feeding then I think my analysis at this level will be proven accurate and perhaps more effective but I'm not so sure of that. I think the essential thing is the sensitive awareness of the envy and the determined analysis of it.

RODMAN:

This sounds rather conciliatory. You are saying that there's a greater unity than would seem apparent when looking at the differences in the various theories of technique.

MASON:

I think so. I think that analysts are analysts, and they're all dealing with that part of the patient we come in contact with and they're picking it up in the transference, they're doing analysis, and I think that some are better than others. And any Kleinian who is not doing that to my mind is not an analyst. If they're just spouting theories of container and contained, and things like that, and making the evidence fit these by now pat phrases, that's not analysis, whoever's doing it.

F. Robert Rodman, M.D.

AS I REMEMBER HER

by Rudolf Ekstein, Ph.D.

In recent years, (when I traveled to Europe,) I visited the Hampstead Clinic, perhaps to present a paper and hopefully to have a visit with Anna Freud. Last year I could not see her because she was in the hospital. This year Anna Freud was at home and through her secretary let me know that most likely I would be able to see her. First I would give a paper at the Hamstead Clinic.

In past years, Anna Freud would usually chair the meeting and open the discussion. I remember well my apprehension when I spoke about a difficult case in which I was not quite sure how to begin the first therapeutic session. My thoughts went back to former clinical teachers, such as Anna Freud and August Aichhorn. In this case it was Aichhorn's way that seemed to be the best. Anna Freud smiled and in her discussion, she agreed that it was Aichhorn's way of working that seemed to be best for the youngster that I was to see. I also recall another meeting on a panel with her in Vienna, the same year, addressing teachers on the relationship between psychoanalysis and education. The field of education was her first interest and remained important to her. My development was similar. She could be critical, but was always objective, polite, accepting and helpful. She always spoke *ad res* and never *ad hominem.* She made one aspire to do his best. She always allowed and encouraged — and this is the way that I have experienced her through these many years — that one could have thoughts and methods of one's own.

But this time, June 30, 1982, it was Dr. Hansi Kennedy who chaired the meeting and ably introduced the discussion. I looked around the room at all the competent teachers that Anna Freud had gathered around her through the years. They have made the Hampstead Child Therapy Clinic in London famous, a place to return to, and from which to gain strength. I spoke then about the termination phase in the treatment of adolescents and I learned much from the discussion which later enabled me to revise the paper.

After that meeting, I was to cross the street from 21 Maresfield Garden to 20 Maresfield Garden, the home of the Freuds. My colleagues had prepared me for the visit and I realized that my wife and I should stay but a very few minutes.

I found Anna Freud outside in the garden, resting on a couch as I knew her father did during his last months in 1939. Her body was frail, her speech not always clear, but the spirit was there as always. Up to the last, she remained interested in our work, and asked about my experience in Vienna. I know that she kept in touch on a day to day basis with the events, training, treatment and research at the clinic across the street. When I left, my wife, Ruth, and I both knew this would be the last visit, the last good-bye, not the usual *Auf Wiedersehen.* In those painful moments the years past flew by.

It was in the fall of 1935 that I heard her for the first time at the old Psychoanalytic Institute in Berggasse. It was a few houses away from Berggasse 19, the home of the Freud's, today the Freud Museum. She came with Dorothy Burlingham, her lifelong collaborator, and addressed those of us who were in training there to become Psychoanalytic Pedagogues. I had recently started this program which was to supplement my education at the University of Vienna. It soon became the core of my interest, and my professional ambitions. Sometime in 1937 I was to start my own analysis. I recall those moments in the waiting room when I entered Berggasse 19 for the first time and was interviewed by Anna Freud.

The war years and the escape from Austria made us refugees. But even in London under these uncertain conditions the work and the inspiration went on. I still have the admission ticket, number 140, which allowed me to hear the lectures and classes for teachers. The offering was "Three Lectures on Psychology by Miss A. Freud", the first to take place on October 27, 1938. We continued the seminars and with them grew a stronger and stronger commitment to psychoanalysis which kept us together through all these years, the days of Fascism in Central Europe, the refugee days, the Second World War, and the slow rebuilding in the years after the war.

During the war my contact with her was limited. I was able to read the first communications about her work with Dorothy Burlingham and others for the children who were orphans, victims of the war. A short while after the war, around 1948, correspondence could be resumed. I was at the Menninger Foundation then and assembled a Freud Issue of the Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic to which Anna Freud contributed.

Later, we met at international conferences, also at the Menninger Foundation. I recall an experience shared with my young daughter, Jean, now an experienced teacher. She heard Anna Freud for the first time as an adolescent and wanted to find out whether my respect and fondness for Anna Freud was "exaggerated." Afterwards, she told me, "Dad, now I know what you mean. She is a wonderful lecturer, a great teacher. But I think I knew all these things anyway." How difficult it was then for her to understand that it was exactly the simple and beautiful language of Anna Freud that made it possible for us to listen, understand what she had to say, and somehow feel that "we knew it anyway." That was the way she wrote and that is the way that I have often heard her address large audiences and summarize and synthesize the scientific papers of the whole congress and make all of it alive for us; making us wish we could achieve her simplicity, creativity, and her capacity to live herself into the mind of the listener. She identified with us and thus we could identify with her.

During one of my visits I brought her little gifts and greetings from the children and teachers of the Anna Freud Kindergarten in Vienna. I know how proud she was that the city where she was once unwelcome and had to leave, named a Kindergarten after her. This helped create a living bridge

between the work in London and that in Vienna. I knew then how wounds can heal.

Late in December of 1979, I had sent a condolence note to her when her lifelong friend and collaborator, Dorothy Burlingham, died. I find a sentence in her response in which she said: "You are quite right that the generation before you is now going out and yours will become the old one." In spite of her growing weakness and the repeated hospitalizations, she continued to answer every letter, many of them handwritten. Only late this year did she ask her secretary to write to me.

Once we had her nephew, Ernst Freud, as a guest in our home in Brentwood. I asked him, "How is Anna Freud?" He told me that he had asked her what she wanted to have conveyed to friends and colleagues. Anna Freud told him to say to us *"Wanderer, kommst du nach Sparta, sage, du habest uns hier liegen gesehen, wie das Gesetz es befahl!"* ("Wanderer, if thou comest to Sparta, tell them you have seen us lying here as was ordered by the law.") She quoted a sentence that we all had learned by heart in our European high schools. Those were the words of Leonidas, defending the culture of Athens against the invading Persians. I suppose to the last, she thought of herself as defending Psychoanalysis, the work of her father; maintaining it, enlarging on it, and living up to her inner law. In that sense she has become for us Antigone who continues to speak for us, as she spoke for her father, and to lead us through the darkness of the Unconscious, and to help us maintain the humanitarian and scientific tradition.

As we were leaving her, I thought of the tired body; and I thought of the colleagues at the Hampstead Clinic who must now carry on the work based on the memory of a good and loving Antigone, a name that Professor Freud once gave her. They are strong and good people and they will continue. And when I think of that and our own determination to help them, and to carry on the work here, the tired face of Anna Freud disappears, the smiling and friendly face comes back to me, the beautiful face of younger years, her humor, her strength and the powerful example she set for us. She was a person who dedicated her life to children, parents, and to all of us who work with children. We had found meaning in her life which had given to so many of us a professional life of meaning and dedication. When I think of that, I realize in some ways I'm no longer lonely. That is the way I remember her!

BOOK REVIEW

Bruno Bettelheim, *Freud and Man's Soul* (New York: Knopf, 1983), 112 pages

Reviewed by David James Fisher, Ph.D.

Bruno Bettelheim belongs to the finest tradition of European and psychoanalytic culture criticism. Whether he is explaining perspicaciously the group dynamics of Jewish prisoners in concentration camps, unmasking the sentimental popular appeal of the Anne Frank memoirs, undermining satirically and caustically replying to *Portnoy's Complaint,* distinguishing trenchantly between survival and resistance in dealing with the literature and films of the Holocaust, or deciphering playfully the unconscious roots of fairy tales, Bettelheim has been at the cutting edge of critical discourse for the past thirty-five years. His works irritate. Even his redundancies shake us from our complacency. He does not take the consensus viewpoint. His creativity requires that he be the outsider, taking well-timed and piercing shots at various establishments and conformist points of view. His writings invariably challenge the readers' received ideas. They cajole the reader to reply, to get angry, to enter into dialogue with Bettelheim, to see, as it were, if his tone of authority is based on substance, or if it simply expresses an authoritarian personality.

Freud and Man's Soul, his thirteenth book, focuses on the most significant area of inquiry in the human and social sciences today, language; more specifically, it addresses the elusive issue of Freud's language, the content and spirit, the surface structure and significant latencies, of Freud's texts.

Bettelheim's argument is that Freud's writings have been misrepresented by his translators in *The Standard Edition.* Why make such a fuss about distorted translation? The culture critic cannot disregard these inaccuracies because Freud's ideas have radically shifted the twentieth-century perception of humanity. Freudian terminology has penetrated into everyday speech. Freud's words have evolved into a universe of their own; his language has had an unparalleled if uncertain destiny. Language is central in understanding Freud's theoretical orientation; the repercussions of Freud's words are vast for those engaged in therapeutic endeavors and in humanistic enterprises. Thus, how Freud was translated is of decisive importance in how he is read and how his ideas are applied. The strategy of Bettelheim's book is to indicate selectively crucial mistranslations of Freud's work from the German to the English. He is uniquely qualified to perform this task. He entered adulthood in Freud's Vienna in the 1920's and 1930's. His cultural, educational, ethnic, and linguistic background resembles Freud's (the most important contrast would be the absence of medical and neurophysiological training in Bettelheim's formation).

Bettelheim alerts us to the outright errors, esoterism, and clumsy technical jargon in *The Standard Edition.* This obstructs the process of making Freud's words accessible to the reader. The translators failed to engender a sense of the implications of psychoanalytic concepts. He emphasizes how Freud, an ingenious and inventive writer, rarely borrowed from Latin and Greek usage; rather the major sources of his writings came from ordinary spoken German, as well as from the existing psychological and psychopathological literature of his day. Bettelheim hammers away at several overlapping themes: that Freud sounds more abstract, more scientific, more dispassionate, more mechanistic in English than in German; that the recourse to specialized vocabulary in the English version covers up imprecise, often soft, thinking and deflects the reader from emotional associations; that Freud frequently opted for the most simple word in German without striving for consistent meaning every time he used a given term; that Freud's language was explicitly chosen to sound an intimate note, that is, that he built theory in order to strike his audiences' private register. In short, reading Freud ought to be a process of familiarity, akin to the spontaneous, empathic feelings of closeness experienced in confronting what is human in oneself. Reading Freud ought not to be conducted at too great a distance, ought not to be experienced with the feelings of strangeness or detachment. Freud's sublime gifts as a writer allow his audience to return to themselves both emotionally and intellectually. The corpus of his work is an extended invitation to explore one's inner depths; it encourages a deeper understanding of one's unconscious and of the unconscious modalities of others.

Although he does not cite his predecessors, Bettelheim's critique of the faulty translations in *The Standard Edition* is not new. Lacan, among the most penetrating, has been railing against erroneous conclusions based on erroneous translation for years. In their superb *The Language of Psychoanalysis,* Laplanche and Pontalis call for more "faithful translation" of Freud's work. English translator, James Strachey, mentioned the "deficiencies" and the "irremediable" faults of his efforts in the 1966 "General Preface" to *The Standard Edition.* Strachey was aware of the untranslatable verbal points in Freud's writings, especially in the autobiographical works like *The Interpretation of Dreams* and *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life.* He mentioned that Freud's German editions were often untrustworthy. Moreover, Jones alerts us to Freud's "cavalier" attitude about foreign editions of his writings; Jones, nevertheless, predicted that the English translation would be more accurate than all previous editions.

At first glance, Bettelheim seems harsh in criticizing the Herculean enterprise of making Freud's complete psychological works available in English. Perhaps the best that any individual could accomplish would be a sustained structure with a unified thematics. This, it seems to me, Strachey accomplished. Bettelheim would disagree, strenuously. He is attacking a

sacred cow by calling into question *The Standard Edition,* which scholars and laymen have gratefully used since its publication between 1953 and 1974. The extensive annotations, explanations, cross referencing, and its official authorization by the Freud family, have made it a chief source of reference for those seriously committed to studying Freud's work. Bettelheim irreverently reveals gaps in the translation, glaring errors of fact, and untenable misinterpretations of Freud's major texts, including the titles of his works.

For Bettelheim, *The Standard Edition* does a disservice to Freud because it distances the reader from his own unconscious, barring access to his own deepest desires. Freud modernized the injunction to know thyself by forcing his audience to confront what is darkest, ugliest, most untamed, most disordered in themselves. Freud's insights, Bettelheim contends, injure modern human beings' narcissistic image of themselves as civilized, rational, perfectable, loving, progressive, dutiful, and harmonious. Misleading and incorrect translations subvert Freud's humanistic intentions; consequently, his translators are responsible for a "perversion of the original," proving, once again, how the translator is a "traitor to the author."

Bettelheim explains the betrayal of Freud by his — admittedly — self-chosen translators. When psychoanalysis was presented to English and American audiences, the analytical side was given a privileged position over the psychical side. Psyche, Bettelheim reminds us, means soul, emotion, and the human conceived in an unscientific sense. To comprehend the psyche, Freud held that one had to know and deal with one's unconscious strivings, unconscious fantasies, and symbolic representations. This form of knowing required interpretation, a sustained effort to get beneath the surface of things, to restore the psyche to its latent layers of meaning. *The Standard Edition* distorts the spiritual side of psychoanalysis by over-emphasizing analysis, the scientific effort to break down and to dissect the mind. Scientists tend to approach the mental apparatus from the outside, thus disregarding the nuances, metaphorical quality, poetic and imagistic contents of the soul. For Bettelheim psychoanalysis unquestionably belongs to the humanistic disciplines. This was Freud's intention. It is consistent with the determining influence of Goethe on Freud's development and methodology. It is consistent with Bettelheim's thesis that Freud's reflections are most fully synthesized in his late, cultural texts. Unfortunately, Freud's translators blunted the emotional impact of what Freud was conveying in order to make the scientific component of his discourse palatable to the "positivistic-pragmatic" branch of study so dominant in England and America. The clarity and definitiveness of Freud's writings in English camouflage the contradictions and ambiguities of the German original. *The Standard Edition* obscures the spirit as well as the context of Freud's ideas by transforming what is essentially a human science (a branch of knowledge much closer to hermeneutical-spiritual knowing) into something that resembles natural science.

Bettelheim detects two motives that underlie the mistranslations: the desire to make psychoanalysis acceptable to a medical and psychiatric community in England and America; and the unconscious wish of the translators to detach themselves from the emotional impact of the unconscious. Countering recent efforts to debunk Freud by characterizing him as an unoriginal, anachronistic, nineteenth-century man of science, Bettelheim claims that Freud evolved from a biologist to a theoretician of the soul. For evidential value, he observes that Freud rarely cited scientific or medical literature, while often referring to or paraphrasing literary, artistic, and philosophic works. Freud wanted the psychoanalytic profession to be ideally composed of "secular ministers of souls," that is, something between the physician and the secular priest. There is no doubt that Freud borrowed from and contributed to psychology, but to a form of psychology far removed from the banalities of Anglo-Saxon behaviorism of the gross obviousness of academic psychology. He was unconcerned with predictive or readily replicated empirical science. Rather, Freud's psychology was tied to a hermeneutical branch of philosophy devoted to grasping the deeper, buried, fragmented, and many-layered nature of psychic reality.

Bettelheim's most telling illustration of mistranslation is his exegesis of the concept of soul (in German: *die Seele*). Freud clearly and distinctly meant soul and not mind or mental apparatus (as *The Standard Edition* has rendered it). Bettelheim has rehabilitated the concept of soul for the psychoanalytic profession, while affirming a militantly secular and humanist version of this metaphor. He does so without muting Freud's lifelong atheism and his unwavering distrust of wishful or delusional thinking. The soul ought not to belong exclusively to the universe of discourse of religious thinkers, Jungians, or mystics. By soul Bettelheim means people's common humanity, their essence, their most valuable traits, their spiritual core. Soul cannot be comprehended precisely without collapsing its emotional and vitalistic resonances. Soul cannot be defined or pinned down. Soul is one of those broader concepts straddling psychology and language; it is a metaphor that Freud employed self-consciously as a metaphor. It evokes both an intellectual and an affective response. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the supernatural, with a religious diety, with salvation, or with immortality. As a secular discipline, it is not incompatible for psychoanalysis to be concerned with spiritual endeavors. The good psychoanalytic researcher investigates the underworld of the soul. He treats the soul as the human being's most prized possession, knows that the soul requires a care and respect — a love — not to be mistaken with the medical orientation of therapy and cure for the body. Bettelheim contends that Freud never wished psychoanalysis to be a sub-specialty of the medical profession. The text he cites most often by Freud is the much neglected *Question of Lay Analysis.*

Bettelheim offers other tasty examples of incorrect English constructions of Freud's seminal concepts. As an adherent of the structural model,

Bettelheim shows that the English version of id, ego, superego radically falsifies Freud's original German, transforming these living aspects of the soul into cold, reified, reductionistic agencies of the mind, totally blunting the affective impact on the reader. Freud selected personal pronouns to name these concepts; Bettelheim restores the it (for id), I or me (for ego), and above I (for superego), showing how the personal pronouns relate directly to the individual's experiences, thereby arousing his associations, fantasies, and desires. The personal pronouns allow the reader to get inside the psychoanalytic process itself; they allow his I or me to borrow from, coexist with, achieve rational control over, the it. He retranslates the famous line from Freud's Thirty-first lecture in the *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* as "Where it was, there should become I." The I, in brief, does not unseat, ride, or obliterate the it, but rather the I labors to change itself in significant ways in order to achieve or perpetuate culture.

There are other semantic rectifications in the Bettelheim volume. "Free association" is not free at all and he urges us to translate it as an idea or image that spontaneously comes to mind. He translates fending off or parrying for "defense," occupation for "cathexis," and lapse for "slips of the tongue." He reveals a double error in the title of the 1915 essay, "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes," and substitutes "Drives and Their Mutability." For *Civilization and Its Discontents,* an inspired title in my judgment, Bettelheim prefers a more literal *The Uneasiness Inherent in Culture* — a title consistent with the underlying intention of the text to be sure, but inconsistent with the artistic underpinnings and imaginative structure of the essay.

However, I found it forced, and a bit illogical, for the translators of *The Standard Edition,* James Strachey and Anna Freud, to be held responsible for the positivistic, empiricist, and medical-biological slant of these twenty-four volumes, especially if we remember historically that both Strachey and Anna Freud were lay analysts, both were analyzed by Freud, and that both were deeply trusted by Freud and members of his estate. Every translation is a rewriting and a reinterpretation. Certainly, there are critical inaccuracies, pretensions, and linguistic problems in *The Standard Edition*; often the multiplicity of meaning, the earthiness, the wit, the Jewish humor, and the poetry of Freud's writings are not sufficiently fleshed out.

Ultimately, Bettelheim's indictment of the translators of *The Standard Edition* is exaggerated. Perhaps purposefully. From their own published writings, it is clear that Strachey and Anna Freud sought to anchor psychoanalysis in a biological framework based on Freud's early energy model. It was not bad faith or unconscious motives that made them reject Bettelheim's version of psychoanalysis as an interpretive science with its own laws and techniques, its own, primarily hermeneutical, sense of exactitude and research strategies. That is, Bettelheim's Freud is subjectively different from the Freud of Strachey and Anna Freud; different, in that his

is more literary, more historical and archeological in methodology, more enamored of prehistory and mythology, more preoccupied with securing psychoanalysis a place of honor in cultural history, less interested in establishing its verifiability and experimental validity. For Bettelheim psychoanalysis is more exciting as a general theory of culture, not (as for

Anna Freud and Stachey) as a refined instrument of therapy. Bettelheim sees the complexity in Freud's thought by explicating his gifts as a writer: his ability to operate on many levels simultaneously, his deft choice of allusions and references, his capacity to touch his readers affectively and intellectually.

If Bettelheim makes errors in emphasis, he compensates for them by his candid and intransigent humanism. He does not tediously lament the current (rather continuous!) crisis or decline of the humanities. Instead, he makes a strong case for humanism. In the process, he recruits Freud to a pivotal position in the modern humanist tradition, albeit a hermeneutical-spiritual one. Bettelheim's humanism is oriented toward the dynamic of self-discovery, toward integrating the hidden and narcissistically injurious truths about one's inner world. His is a demystifying and critical humanism which attempts to lay bare the psycho-sexual roots of human beings' psyche and behavior. This form of humanism is neither mawkish nor akin to the belief in Santa Claus. Bettelheim firmly understands the determining role of the unconscious in symbol formation, inner and outer representations of reality, and in the multiple ways in which individuals deceive themselves. Bettelheim practices a polemical kind of psychoanalytic culture criticism. He discloses the errors, sophistry, idiocy, dangers, and silliness (sometimes all of the above) in his opponent's views. Bettelheim has a vision and willingly argues it. He is prepared to generalize, to take risks, to give offense, in order to stir up his audience.

Despite its negations, I read this essay as essentially an affirmative work. It is written in defense of culture, more specifically it depicts how conflict works both to generate and to allow the individual to comprehend cultural creation. Bettelheim sees no end to the individual's antagonistic relationship to his environment, no end to intrapsychic conflict. He accepts these struggles as part of humanity's existential curse. Rather than be wished away, struggle ought to be embraced. It is not accidental that the feisty Bettelheim published this work first in *The New Yorker,* the weekly that analysands read. It appears he decided tactically to influence the psychoanalytic community by coming through the back door, analysts would hear his message via the analysands's words from the couch. There is controlled anger in his writings, a certain glee in standing apart, a pride in pointing out the deficiencies and shallowness of American culture. Bettelheim's tendency to repeat himself, a characteristic flaw in all of his writings, suggests a frustration at not being listened to, an exasperation at not being understood.

Despite its weaknesses, its self-righteous and strident tone, he has written a spirited essay, which posits that knowledge of the self and that the search for the truth are at the center of the psychoanalytic project. He writes from an independent and free thinking position, one which indicates his debt to and identification with Freud, especially the late Freud, and his animus toward establishment psychoanalysis in America. Psychoanalysis, he emphasizes, was never designed to move in the direction of social accommodation or adaptation to the prevailing opinions, values, or anxieties of any civilization. In the midst of the contemporary malaise of psychoanalysis, the essay is an eloquent testimony to the need for humaneness, truthfulness, compassion, and courage on the part of the psychoanalytic researcher and practitioner in pursuit of the buried meanings of humanity's inner life. Bettelheim, finally, enjoins us to return to the soulful letter and spirit of Freud's writings with the same tragic skepticism of the old Freud. Such a voyage into the realm of humanity's soul is surely interminable, but Bettelheim, with his dialectical love of process, is undeterred. He would agree with T.S. Eliot in enjoining us to launch and sustain the journey:

> We shall not cease from exploration,
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time.

Introduction to Remarks by Ivan McGuire

Samuel Wilson, M.D.

In this newly discovered contribution, Ivan McGuire, one of the previous Directors of Education of the Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Institute, provides a glimpse back into his accumulated wisdom, distilled and honed for presentation to the faculty on the eve of his departure as Director, in 1965.

Dr. McGuire held office during a time of great ferment and change (see interview by Robert Rodman, this Bulletin, Volume I, No. 2). A new regime had been victorious in its move to establish a liberated psychoanalytic curriculum. McGuire had been an instrumental leader in this evolution. Traversing the interstices of orthodoxy, he had been a voice of moderation, intelligence, and reason. His legacy was to warn those he was leaving about the dangers inherent in becoming too "attached" to any set of ideas. He knew such an attachment, with its multiple motives, could lead to intellectual impoverishment, personal constriction, and potential institutional chaos.

McGuire called for a temperate, moderate view, a view grounded firmly in common sense, integrity, and reason, constantly refined by clinical data. He adduced the notion that theories are to be played with, used, and discarded when no longer applicable.

For the most part, his words of wisdom fell on deaf ears. The siren song of revealed truth prevailed.

After his address, McGuire all but dropped from sight. He continued to practice, quietly, in Beverly Hills, then Westwood. He was rarely, if ever, seen around the Institute or Society. We are left to wonder why his impact diminished so precipitously. Perhaps his message was so moderate that it did not arouse the degree of zeal necessary to spawn a cadre of true believers eager to spread the word.

It has been said that a prophet has no honor in his own land. Much of what McGuire prophesied came true. The training program was brought to its knees in the early 70's, the victim of splits and factionalism.

But what of McGuire? His voice is only an echo, of one crying in the wilderness.

REMARKS

by Ivan McGuire, M.D.

I would like to say that I would be very happy to dispense entirely with not only theory but the curriculum also and seek again that golden era just prior to the time when psychoanalysis began to be organized. Although as in any other branch of learning this was inevitable, it was not a consumation devoutly to be wished for and I think has long since begun to exhibit those signs of the law of diminishing returns. Having unburdened myself of what may seem to be a rather radical view if taken literally, it would seem that I have little else to say. But that isn't the case, for I do not wish to be taken literally and besides, I have a great deal to say, so much in fact, that out of concern for all of you who have already put in a good days work, I am going to say very little, just a few remarks to correct any hasty judgment about my preceding radical remarks. Even though we all yearn for the Augustian age, transfigured and made rosy in our retrograde fantasies, I somehow know that is beyond reach. Secondly, I am not so sure that it was as rosy as my fantasies depict it. I am sure that they had problems peculiar to their time. And thirdly, I have a rather inordinate interest in, and curiosity about, the present state of the union and feel a keen responsibility for what is to follow.

1. Function of Facility: Research, Therapy, Training

Because of the last two functions, we tend to attach too great importance to relative uniformity in theory and we hanker after standardization, and find ourselves in a dilemma if we think current differences may amount to incompatibility. It is however very necessary for us to recognize that uniformity easily conduces to stasis and that a static science is dead. What is psychiatry? It is a collection of hypotheses which are forever subject to retesting.

2. What is a theory?

In essence it is simply intelligent explanation. The intellect fashions theories in accordance with its innate taste for clarity and unity and always reaches some sort of compromise between them. In theory can we ever be exposed to all possible relevant tests. We cannot be concerned whether theory is verified but we are concerned about its probability in the light of evidence that actually exists. All historically significant theories have agreed with the facts but only more or less.

Science is a continuous adaptation of theory to continually expanding facts. If a new hypothesis is necessary we can be concerned with one question only, that is does it cover more facts. We cannot be concerned about partisanship, schools or authors. Mental organization involves a continual re-organization and although mental life is conditioned by organization it is

also emergent and new from moment to moment. In its adaptive activity the living being is always becoming.

3. Unfortunately in our special field, there is actually no teachable body of knowledge verified by scientific techniques of experimentation and control. Because of this there is an enormous tendency to satisfy our need for causality by falling back on faith and defending this with apostolic zeal and fanaticism. We all have a coefficient of personal error and it is safer to assume that it is high and positively dangerous to forget that it exists.

There have been many discussions about whether psychoanalysis could be taught except in a very elementary and schematic way. The discrepancy between theory and practice has always been the source of much speculation. Although a great many rules and attempted standardization have been imposed, there is no agreement sufficiently unanimous to justify the use of a text book. Too much theory is simply a restatement of what is already known and is very little use for further research.

If we wish to further the science of psychiatry, to increase our knowledge of mental life so as to continually widen the range of its potential application we must recognize that the development and advance of sound theory is as important as the maintenance and extension of sound practice. We must pursue them concurrently. We should make a habit of checking theory, old and new, by our own experience. Individual testing is a communal responsibility to which as a group we are not sufficiently alive and which we do not stress enough in our training of candidates.

4. But now about the place of theory in our curriculum. No experiment can be conceived without some sort of theory. If a new speculative theory proves unsuccessful it can be surrendered with ease. We have to run the risk of working within a framework that some day may prove to be wrong. A new theory is not just an increment to existing knowledge, what is already known. Its assimilation requires the reconstruction of prior theory and a re-evaluation of prior fact. This requires considerable competition between segments of the scientific community and it is the only historical process that ever actually results in the rejecting of one previously accepted theory and the adoption of another. Controversy over theory is futile. It is not effective against the will to believe. Theories pass not because they have been disproved but because they have been superceded. Most scientific societies welcome deep and far-reaching differences of opinion amongst their members because the awareness of such differences is regarded as a sign of vitality and growth. Indeed uniformity of opinion and progress in science seldom coincide.

5. So, in the place of theory, although it is indispensable, I would emphasize the need to theorize, the importance of observing phenomena, fact gathering and accurate reporting. The one indispensable condition for health in a scientific society would appear to be the existence in a sufficient

majority of its members, of the ability to give fact finding the necessary priority over other motivations. It is difficult to maintain a stalwart and steadfast enthusiasm without faith in a saving gospel. But the great danger is in carrying belief beyond the data of experience. The flexible and inventive mind may hit upon a new theory, the only use of which will be to sharpen and further reflection and observation.

6. The institutional matrix is unfavorable to change. By its very nature, our professional education fosters the tendency to try to force the data of experience into conceptual molds which inhibit the assimilation of any new sort of phenomenon. Although it is not the function of scientific organization to adjudicate a difference, unfortunately the futile attempt is often made. It is for this reason that with too great a commitment to the institutional and academic establishment one so often loses the capacity to be astonished or surprised because the anomaly, the piece that doesn't fit, is so often overlooked. Science has never been primarily concerned with the formation of rules and theories but with the gathering of facts and the use of these in the direction of new synthesis and articulation with other assumptions and speculations and partially verified observations. It is a fact of great significance that new discoveries are so often made by the young and this is due largely to the fact that they are not so committed, by prior practice, to traditional rules.

I have emphasized the need to collect data, report it and theorize about it. Rather than a theory of psychoanalysis, we should constantly review the history of the evolution of psychoanalytic thought in the hope of cultivating an attitude of mind that will prepare us for surprises and lessens our disillusionment when our expectations are violated. We may then learn to use our materials as part of a process, a continuum, rather than as disparate pieces that so often stubbornly refuse to be fitted into an existing framework. Other sciences permit and even foster differences of opinion while psychoanalysis is marked by a tendency to fission. No dilemma in science is potentially insoluble, because science does not create facts. Our tendency to fission is certainly due to a limitation of our psychological reality sense which leads us into the greatest and most dangerous deception, that of a fixed belief.

I think the training of analysts should be directed less toward the acquisition of practical and theoretical knowledge than the extension of intellectual independence. He who is always listening to the voices of others remains ignorant of his own.

The danger in to which most of us have fallen at one time or another, is to try to conceive our data in accordance with a plan, a preconceived theory, and it does not matter what theory it is. The flow of psychiatric phenomena cannot be confined within the limits of psycho-analytical theories. Theory ought to be the final result, the deposit of experience, not a means of gaining new experience.

It often comes about that the special symptom of a case and its accord with a theory forces itself upon an analyst at an early stage. In such an instance, there is a likelihood that the analyst has sought refuge in terminology which is perhaps not only the least valuable of our tools but perhaps the most hazardous. A great wealth of terminology and theoretical knowledge may serve as a facade to conceal a mental void. In reading psychoanalytical writings, one at times suspects that the main inclination was not for the analytical manner of thought and investigation but rather for the analytical manner of expression. Such displayed respect for terminology may prove to be the scientific expression of our belief in the magic of words.

It is the idea that occurs freely that will bring the analyst upon the tract of repressed processes not the idea that is trammelled by theoretical prejudices.

If psychiatry is to continue as a living science, the process of re-casting and expanding theory must continue. What we need is a safe theory that ensures a free and open encounter with experience, not necessarily a valid one, for more truth comes from error than confusion. The ideal would be to direct our efforts in such a way as to achieve an atmosphere favorable to the evolutionary process, trying always to prevent the few bits of knowledge we have from congealing into a closed system of rules and theories which are no longer to be tested but accepted as articles of faith. When this occurs it creates a condition favorable to that kind of revolution that so often brings about great change but no progress.

"PREOCCUPATION AND THE ANALYTIC SITUATION"

by Joseph Jones, M.D.

The scientific meeting of November 18, 1982, was a presentation of "Preoccupation and the Analytic Situation" by Melvin R. Lansky, M.D. An earlier version of this paper was awarded the Jacques Brien Award by the Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Society in 1982. Lansky begins his paper with the challenging assumption that much, if not all, of what is usually called "psychopathology" can be viewed as a disturbance in attention to the here and now. Preoccupation is defined as a type of inattention but which is less inclusive than simple inattention. Thus, preoccupation can be defined as "the apparent inability to stop the continuity of previous mental activity." The analyst may see preoccupation by a moving away of thoughts from the immediate interpersonal situation (the transference) to something else.

Building upon his experience in family therapy, Lansky describes the marital situation, where both husband and wife will collude in supporting the preoccupied state. This occurs in a narcissistically vulnerable person, with the preoccupations serving basically a defensive function, that "compensates for a split in the ego... and a fear of being exposed as defective." He discusses a hierarchy of defenses to this "narcissistic wounding," moving from the more pathological defense of disengagement through impulsive action and preoccupation to a healthier state of sublimation. The preoccupation may cover over a low grade depression, and make the person refractory to analytic treatment.

In the final section of his paper, Lansky raises the question of whether or not psychoanalysis is prescribing a preoccupied state. He comments that conceiving analysis in terms of attention brings into particular focus the primacy of transference interpretation. Correct and timely interpretations serve primarily to remove pathological preoccupations.

Rudolf Ekstein, Ph.D., discussed the paper primarily from its philosophical aspect. He thought that by focusing on the issues of attention and preoccupation that the person and his troubles could be seen in more phenomenological terms, rather than as the results of abstract drives and forces. Dr. Ekstein also wondered whether preoccupation was a state of pathology or a state of normality. In elucidating how psychoanalysts (and others) are often led astray by their language, he quoted Nietzsche who commented, "Men will believe in God as long as they believe in grammar."

Allan Compton, M.D., who began his discussion by praising the questions raised in the paper, also noted that he had prepared a rather short discussion. He was glad that Dr. Lansky considered the paper "an essay" and noted that there were a number of areas where a substantial amount of work would have to be done to harmonize this with traditional psychoanalytic theory. He specifically wondered about the role of anxiety in preoccupation, and also noted that Dr. Lansky had not mentioned the fact that preoccupation is often a defense against unanalyzed anal-sadism.

A lively discussion ensued from the floor. Mort Shane, M.D., noted that primary maternal preoccupation was part of a healthy personality. Richard Edelman, M.D., noted that a person who is truly preoccupied may have difficulty communicating. Arthur Malin, M.D., commented that he wished Dr. Lansky had talked a little bit more about how these deficiency states developed; he said that the term "preoccupation" might help us in focusing upon how the patient was injured by his parents' inability to pay attention. The general consensus of the evening was that the paper opened up some very interesting topics, and helped us think about traditional material in a new light.

A PSYCHOANALYTIC EXPLORATION OF MICHELANGELO'S HISTORIES IN THE SISTINE CHAPEL

by Clay Whitehead, M.D.

Dr. Jerome Oremland recently presented his study of Michelangelo's histories at the November scientific program of the Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Society and Institute. Those who attended with the hope of deepening their understanding of Michelangelo's genius and creativity were not disappointed. Dr. Oremland's paper, richly illustrated by slides, considerably enlarged our understanding of the Sistine Chapel ceiling masterpiece. In addition, it allowed us the opportunity to observe the application of psychoanalytic understanding through a sensitive and intelligent presentation.

Dr. Oremland began his remarks with some background history of the creation of the Sistine Chapel and outlined some of the reasons why Michelangelo was selected for doing this monumental work. His position was that the histories largely reflect the artist's personal interpretation of the Genesis stories. Dr. Oremland's slides and comments outlined and amplified the powerful expressiveness of the nine paintings. He then briefly considered the contributions by art historians on the meaning and organization of these works. With these preparations accomplished, Dr. Oremland proceeded with the psychoanalytic aspect of his paper.

Oremland's position is that the central ceiling illustrations represent a program elaborated from the Genesis story by Michelangelo to create a pictorialization of the genesis of the self. When the ceiling is viewed from the altar looking toward the entrance one observes a narrative illustrating an historical account of creation leading to the emergence of man and relatedness. Dr. Oremland suggests that in addition to this view, if one looks from the entrance toward the altar, one may observe the metaphorical retrospection into one's own personal history. Dr. Oremland illustrated this thesis meticulously and with great psychoanalytic insight. He then considered the panels in more detail in reverse order, that is, from the altar to the entrance, and demonstrated the existence of central epigenetic themes expressed largely through the story of the creation and of Noah. His conclusion was that at some level Michelangelo knew that within the Genesis story itself lies a veiled version of the development of the self and of relatedness. Dr. Oremland suggests that part of the genius of the work lay in Michelangelo's capacity to evoke in the viewer an uncanny sense of looking back into his own personal infinity.

The discussant for the evening was Dr. Birgitta Wohl from the Department of Art History at Cal State Northridge. Her discussion provided an excellent compliment to Dr. Oremland's largely psychoanalytic presentation. Her background in art history allowed her to examine numerous important facets of the work which Dr. Oremland had not considered. However, her interesting comments at times showed the limitation in psychoanalytic understanding which occasionally pervades traditional discussion of art history.

One of her essential points was that instead of being organized around tripartite divisions, the ceiling should more properly be seen as reflecting alternating dualisms. Dr. Wohl also pointed out that there was good reason to believe that Michelangelo did not operate independently in his designs for the ceiling. This issue remained somewhat unresolved; however, it did set the stage for an important point: Perhaps the original program which Dr. Oremland has ascribed to Michelangelo truly belongs with the writers of the Genesis stories. Her position then is that Michelangelo was a transmitter of the Genesis themes, rather than the creator of an individualistic program of his own.

Another excellent aspect of Dr. Wohl's discussion involved the consideration of the Neoplatonic philosophies current among the early Renaissance artists. In her view certain aspects of the ceiling should be seen as an illustration of these Neoplatonic ideas conjoined with the theology of the Catholic church. This aspect of her discussion led to the consideration of St. Augustine, and the suggestion that many of the Neoplatonic ideas current during Michelangelo's era originated in Augustine's conception of the Heavenly and Earthly city. Dr. Wohl suggests that this may be seen as one of the sources of origin for the dualism which she had noted earlier.

Her scholarly comments were followed by a discussion by Gerald Aronson, M.D. There was also a brief discussion from the floor. I left the presentation with a deeper understanding of Michelangelo and with considerable appreciation for Dr. Oremland's illuminating study. In addition, I felt that the evening provided another powerful example of the complementarity of psychoanalysis and the study of history.