

EDITORIAL: THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PSYCHOANALYSIS: AN HISTORICAL APPRECIATION

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As a bystander, I remember the idealism, enthusiasm, and high aims that motivated the founders of the American Institute of Psychoanalysis in 1941. They had suffered under the rigid dogmatic restrictions of the New York Psychoanalytic Institute, and they felt so sure of their ability to put into effect their beliefs in freedom of ideas. It was a painful lesson to observe (and by then I was a candidate) the subsequent schisms (Eckardt, 1978) with their unpleasant interpersonal undercurrents appearing like a repetition compulsion, as if the group had learned nothing from their own previous experience. For inner and outer reasons (I spent 5 years overseas in occupied Germany and then moved to Washington, D.C.) I remained unaffiliated after graduation as an analyst. I have always been grateful for this period free of all conceptual pressures, allowing my clinical impressions to find their own expressions and organizations. Once I had gained some inner sense of reference, I began to read all theories with alertness and interest, freed from the resistance I had felt before, a resistance based on my inability to sort out with any clarity the palatable from the unpalatable. Now I was ready for some professional associations. The Washington School founded by Sullivan as a forum for a free exchange of ideas was an ideal reentry. Then I heard about the efforts to found the Academy. I was not a participant in the pre-founding organizing meetings, but I became an enthusiastic charter member, fully in accord with the stated aims. I was full of gratitude and admiration for the care and genius given our constitution, which, by adhering to a few principles, promised to make possible the then

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seemingly impossible, that is, to form a lasting congenial productive association that believed in the necessity and thus the respect of heterogeneity.

Well, here we are 30 years later, friends, viable and adaptable to address serious concerns that challenge our profession.

Two major interests motivated the founders of the Academy. One arose in response to the dogmatism, in-fighting, and schisms of psychoanalytic institutes that obstructed a stimulating creative exchange of new ideas. It hoped to enhance the science of psychoanalysis by the establishment of a forum devoted to the exchange of ideas and experience among psychoanalysts, no matter how different their persuasions. The constitution aimed to protect this interest in a number of ways, but in particular by asserting that the Academy will not license, supervise, certify, or accredit any training program or institute, thus avoiding power struggles related to all of these activities.

The other interest arose out of the conviction of all, but the passionate conviction of a few, that communication with colleagues in other disciplines in the behavioral sciences and the humanities was essential to our growth as psychoanalysts. The constitution furthered this interest by establishing the principle of the interdisciplinary nature of our meetings and by creating the category of scientific associates.

I would like to recreate for you some of the passions concerning this second interest, for it is this that gives the Academy its uniqueness.

First, I want to briefly recall the strife between psychoanalysts. Appropriately enough our keynote speaker at our first meeting in Chicago in 1956 was Dr. Jurgen Ruesch (1958), then professor of psychiatry at the University of California in San Francisco. He spoke about "Communication Difficulties Among Psychiatrists." In his address he asked the question: "Why, may we ask, do these therapists not attempt to become creative themselves instead of promoting a dogma in a discipline that still has so much to explore?" He continued: "The answer to this question seems to be found in the fact that in order to communicate successfully people must learn to tolerate differences between themselves and from person to person. They must understand the function of an action or a statement within the system of the other person, and be capable of finding the corresponding element in their own system" (p. 95). Ruesch mentioned the new information theories and feedback phenomena that have shifted our focus to information, education, and human relations. He states: "Our present period thus does not function so much on the principle of shared assumptions and homogeneous groups as on the principle of under-

standing differences of assumptions and the acceptance of heterogeneity" (p. 97).

Ideas to form a new national organization had surfaced in varying forms for a few years but gained momentum through the activities of a nucleus of analysts around Clara Thompson and Janet Rioch. They corresponded actively with Jules Masserman, who gave vital assistance in arranging our first meeting on April 30, 1956, and invaluable help in the drafting of the constitution. I believe that the strong emphasis on an interdisciplinary orientation is largely to be credited to Masserman. It was strongly supported by Roy Grinker and also by Franz Alexander. I will highlight some of their actions, beliefs, and statements that saw psychoanalysis as part of psychiatry, biology, and all sociocultural dimensions of human existence. If I single them out, it is for historical reasons and in order to highlight this important function of the Academy. Judd Marmor, John Spiegel, and others have ardently pursued similar perspectives.

Harold Visotsky (1979) wrote a brief biographical sketch of Jules Masserman when he became the 107th president of the American Psychiatric Association in 1978. He wrote: "Jules Masserman's life goal has been to clarify, integrate and broaden knowledge by establishing communication within the fragmented field of psychiatry and its estranged neighbors (experimental animal research, general medicine, nursing, psychology, anthropology, sociology, economics, the law, social work and the arts, the lay public, and the tradition of the past to mention a few). His life work, in short, has been to push, pull, coax, seduce, and at times exasperate us into fulfilling the directive expressed by E. M. Forster: 'Only connect. . . . Live in fragments no longer' " (p. 1023). Masserman was introduced to an integrative approach by training with Adolph Meyer at Johns Hopkins. Roy Grinker invited him in 1936 to join the University of Chicago. This led to his training in psychoanalysis at the young Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis and to an analysis with Franz Alexander, who, although a proponent of Freud's theories, was not one to be harnessed into dogma then or later. Throughout his early decades as a psychiatrist Jules attended to patient care and to animal research. His outstanding experiments with conflict-engendered neurotic and psychotic behavior in monkeys led, among others, to new formulations of anxiety formation.

Masserman, a man of many talents and skills, had an infinite amount of energy for effective action. We are much indebted to him for giving the Academy a sound base in the psychiatric community. He had a hand in creating superb programs for our initial meetings. He arranged to have the scientific contributions published in a book series called

Science and Psychoanalysis, well acknowledged for its quality. His standing in the hierarchy of the American Psychiatric Association and his political skills helped us to overcome a major threat when the American Psychoanalytic Association wanted to establish, within the framework of the American Psychiatric Association, a separate board to examine and certify candidates in psychoanalysis, assuming they would be the only certifying body. His vital correspondence with and counterproposals to the APA officials led finally to the demise of this attempt to usurp power and undermine the Academy.

Jules Masserman forged many other interdisciplinary societies on a national and international scale for scientific and political purposes. To combat the threat of nuclear war is for him as much a part of being a psychiatrist as his animal research for understanding human behavior or the minutiae of psychoanalytic inquiry. His talents are unique, and I believe the Academy would not be what it has become if Jules had not been one of the assistants who gave birth to the Academy. My thanks go to him.

Roy Grinker (1958), president of the Academy in 1961–1962, at our meeting in May 1957, critically addressed the dilemma of psychoanalysts. He stated:

Using the tool of psychoanalysis they find what they search for and little else, for there are no other categories of answers to the kinds of questions asked . . . (p. 137). One of the obstructions to the relationship of psychoanalysts with other behavioral scientists is the fact that the psychoanalysts who are working with patients as therapists usually avoid collaboration in any psychophysiological research in the name of their therapeutic responsibilities. This is a great loss for psychoanalysis, for working within a multidisciplinary group, as I have, tends to sharpen psychiatric observations in an effort to match the exactitude of other measurements. Furthermore, this cooperation tends to negate the psychoanalyst's tendency to minimize reality factors and variables outside the psychic system . . . (p. 135). I believe psychoanalysts fail to recognize spontaneous growth tendencies in human individuals, often delayed in time and interrupted in process by external events, but seemingly always present and able to become activated under propitious circumstances . . . (p. 137). The future is not unequivocally determined by the past, but novelities such as growth, variation, and evolution appear everywhere. There is a transitional zone of indeterminacy between the fixed past and not-yet future which has alternative possibilities of time and structure. In all functions of the mind the physiological, the meaningful imprint of experience, and reality are manifest . . . (p. 139). It is thus difficult to see how either as a philosophy or a science psychoanalysis can attain its full potential without opening its boundaries for greater conceptual and operational transactions (p. 140).

As to the future, the world outlook is grim. The danger of nuclear power is not contained, terrorism is ever on the increase, billions of

dollars go for weaponry and space conquest, and little is left for human needs. Our confidence in political leadership, no matter what party, is at a low point. The problems seem to have grown beyond the capacity of our collective wisdom. Close to home we are bestirred by a different dimension of events. The status of psychoanalysis has tumbled from an inflated place to one below its actual significance. This has resulted in a smaller number of medical students entering psychiatry, and of these, a lesser percentage desiring psychoanalytic training. In order to survive, many psychoanalytic institutes are accepting candidates with ever-decreasing pretraining requirements. All this does drive home the notion that this is no time for complacency. That may be to the good.

Thomas Kuhn, in his *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, notes that changes in a field of a particular discipline occur long before there is an accepted shift in paradigm. Changes in perspective in our field have been much in evidence since the late 1950's and increased in the 1960's, and 1970's. I glanced at our discourses as documented in the Masserman-edited series *Science and Psychoanalysis* and was delighted to find over and over again statements that can be guides for new emerging paradigms.

I can only give you a sample. Again I choose with historical considerations as well as content in mind. Franz Alexander (1962) spoke about "Psychoanalytic Training for Practice" at our Chicago meeting in May 1961. He asked:

What is it then in our educational system that requires change? It is not the details of our system but its spirit. Our present overschematized and rigid prescriptions do not help our students to learn from experience. We do not expose them sufficiently to the great uncertainties inherent in our standard treatment procedures. . . . The central core of all weaknesses of our educational system is that in teaching we are oriented more toward the past than the future. Not as individuals, but as an organized group of teachers, we do not stress sufficiently that psychoanalysis . . . is a steadily developing field pregnant with uncertainties . . . Our function is to develop students who can think and speak independently, who can learn from experience, and thus participate in improving our procedures (p. 177).

At the same meeting, Dr. John Spiegel (1962) urged: "We are now in a position to recognize that ignorance of and indifference to the social sciences are more dangerous to the intactness of psychoanalytic theory, for the future, than are diligent study and thoughtful appreciation" (p. 112). He stated that the more attention one gives to the interlocking of personality and social systems, the harder it becomes to point to a large number of direct, specific mutual effects that will stand up as unassailable generalizations. He concluded his presentation

with suggestions for an adequate educational program for social concepts.

That particular meeting devoted to psychoanalytic education made it convincingly clear that there was no room for complacency if one were to become or was a psychoanalyst. That meeting left me exhilarated by its broad vistas but also somewhat overwhelmed. How could one live up to such educational challenge? But then I remembered something akin to Alexander's words: it is not a matter of amassing that much detailed knowledge but a matter of the spirit of inquiry, of imaginative curiosity, and interest in all that concerns our patients, their psyche, their body, their family (how they eat, talk, and sleep), their work and its atmosphere, and their life style with all its inclusions and omissions. As any new information adds color or meaning to existing knowledge, this spirit gives our psychoanalytic inquiry zest and spark. We were also being asked then and more urgently now to reevaluate our therapeutic approaches to grasp all potentials for giving effective therapy in a shorter period of time. I agree with Roy Grinker that we tend to underestimate the potentials in some patients for spontaneous growth and, as others have stressed, the educative aspects of therapy. Our meeting in 1961 reflected currents of change that may evolve into accepted paradigms in the future.

When we speak of education, we cannot think of institute training. The young candidates need much clinical experience and maturing judgment to make proper use of the conceptual and therapeutic tools they were given in their training. Experience, a broad investigative spirit, exposure to stimulation, and affirmation by, and exchange of, information and ideas with colleagues is our lifelong educational venture.

And that is what the Academy is all about.

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