

THE PSYCHOLOGIST AS PSYCHOANALYST: THE PROPER STUDY OF MANKIND...

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INTRODUCTION

I am grateful and honoured—although I must also admit rather surprised—to have been invited to give this Annual Society Lecture. The surprise is allied to a feeling of admiration at your openmindedness because I must assume that I owe your invitation to my connection with the School of Psychotherapy at St. Vincent's Hospital, Elm Park and the formation that we try to give in that school is guided by psychoanalytic principles which some might see as alien to the eclectic spirit of scientific psychology.

I would like today to talk about these guiding principles and the way in which they illuminate and challenge some of the current approaches to the theory and practice of psychology. But let me say at the outset that psychoanalysts in their turn should allow themselves to be challenged by the intelligence and rigour with which psychologists develop and test their theories, and perhaps even more by the spirit of commitment and care that characterises the day-to-day practice of many psychologists.

A CONCRETE PSYCHOLOGY OF MAN

I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that in the face of the enormous scale and complexity of the problems that we confront here in Ireland and indeed throughout the world, there has never been a greater need for a sophisticated psychological understanding of the human subject in the reality of his concrete existence. Such an understanding is necessary not only to reach some resolution of the problems posed by the growth of such aberrations as child abuse or drug addiction or racism or the development of weapons of mass

**The 13th Society Lecture delivered before The Psychological Society of Ireland,
May 1987.**

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destruction, but also to provide a baseline for reaching a judgement on what truly constitutes human behaviour and criteria for demonstrating the flaws in the myriad solutions proposed by ideologues and charlatans as shortcuts to human happiness.

But who is to work at providing such an understanding? No doubt it is the work of society as a whole and in particular of the philosophers, the theologians and the educators. But again I do not think I exaggerate when I say that many of us entered psychology with the hope that it would provide the methodology for acquiring such knowledge in a scientific way and that many members of the public and at least some of our colleagues in psychiatry, sociology and allied disciplines are willing to believe that our familiarity with the functioning of the individual human being in so many different settings puts us in a privileged position for acquiring such an understanding.

However it must be said that both students of psychology and those from other specialities who approach psychologists are sometimes disappointed at the narrowness of the perspective from which psychology as a science approaches the human being and that psychology proper—I mean the psychology that is published in our journals or reported on in our conferences or taught in our universities—rarely seems to be directed towards this concrete psychology of the human subject.

This is not to say that we are incapable of working towards such a psychology. We know that the Irish contribution to the understanding of the men and women of our time has been justly recognised as a major one. It was not just the uncreated conscience of his own race that James Joyce forged in his work and both he and Samuel Beckett, to name two, are indispensable reference points for anyone who wishes to reflect on the predicament of contemporary Western man.

It is this fact among others that leads me to ask you to reconsider at this still youthful and malleable stage of psychology in Ireland whether the style of psychology that we have broadly speaking adopted up to now is the one best suited to our particular genius and needs. My own belief is that we run a serious risk of stultifying our own possibilities by needlessly tying ourselves to the Procrustean bed of Anglo-American empiricism and positivism with its stress on the prestige of the repeatable experiment and its emphasis on the measurable, predictable and controllable aspects of human nature.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF PREDICTION AND CONTROL

I remember how pleasantly surprised I was when more than 20 years ago with a primary degree in physics and mathematics and a smattering of philosophical psychology I was able safely to negotiate a Summer School in Fordham University and gain admittance to the graduate programme that started me on

said about a department of psychology that it was able to take a physics graduate so easily on board. I then began to realise a probable reason why I had been welcomed with such open arms was that one of the main research programs in Fordham at that time was funded by the US Navy who were seeking the help of the Psychology Department in designing, if I remember rightly, airplane control panels that could be more easily read by pilots during night missions.

Fordham at that time was one of the more humane psychology departments with a strong interest in philosophical and clinical as well as experimental psychology, but it was there for the first time where I began to sense in some way that if psychology departments ever did get to dealing with human beings it would be in a very roundabout way. Students who felt more strongly than I did that psychology was neglecting its proper object by focussing on white rats and dark rooms rather than people, tended to be referred to the Department of Education and Counselling: not, I hasten to add, to be counselled into being better able to adapt to the reality of their situation or to ventilate their anger about the department head of psychology but to learn the skills which would allow them to do what they had wanted to do when they came into psychology, namely to understand and work with people. But what then was the Department of Psychology trying to teach?

The explanation that I most often heard was that psychology is a science and that, as in any science, the neophyte must understand the simple and uninteresting things before going on to complex and important matters. It was necessary therefore to understand simple situations of learning, motivation and perception in laboratory conditions before attempting to understand them in all their complexity in concrete human situations; and, what was more, it was necessary to understand these functions in animals before you could hope to grasp them in the much more complex organisms that human beings are.

Such simple beginnings do in fact turn out to have extremely practical results. The correct prediction of behaviour in response to a stimulus, whether that stimulus be in an educational or a therapeutic or an industrial setting, is often taken to be a test of the scientific validity of a psychological theory. And it is the predictable response to a stimulus that allows you to control behaviour. The place of Pavlovianism in the socialist reconstruction of the USSR and the role of behaviourism in creating the consumer economy of the West indicates the seriousness of the human issues involved in the choosing of your method of psychology.

We all accept that psychology is not just a set of techniques and that our practice must always find its justification in theory. But it is perhaps less often acknowledged that the theories and practices of psychology are themselves rooted in an ethic, by which I mean not just a code of professional nrartirp. hut a set nf fundamental heliefs about the annronriate way one mav

is often to find oneself at the service of ideals and values which one might not explicitly wish to serve.

Psychology should surely be even less entitled than the physical sciences to claim for itself a value-free status. But is it not remarkable that it has scored its most notable successes in the two greatest military-industrial states that the world has ever known? Pavlovianism in the East and behaviorism in the West are virtually indistinguishable in terms of psychological theory and practice and show the same willingness to condition and manipulate human behaviour in the name of goals higher than those of subjective desire. Think of what the development of psychological testing owes to the millions recruited in the first and second world wars and what motivational studies owe to media advertising and the rationalisation of work practices. And what developmental and educational psychology owe to the ideological indoctrination that goes under the name of mass education. Psychology, like Othello, has done the state a service—and they know it. But in so doing it has largely replaced the study of the human person with the study of the way in which the person's individuality and subjectivity can be neutralised in the service of ideologically determined goals.

Thus it is that psychology has, incredibly, come to replace economics as the type of the dismal science. Psychologists who should be, and who would often wish to be, those who are *par excellence* engaged in the proper study of mankind, have slipped more and more into a reductionistic methodology which approaches human beings not in their concrete reality as the only beings who can speak about their desires, but rather by biological analogy and by statistical abstraction.

The one-dimensional man of the economists who was considered simply along an axis of production and consumption at the service of the state or of business is being replaced by the *homo psychologies* of Skinner's *Walden Two* (1976) or Huxley's *Brave New World* (1958) who is so successfully conditioned that he is unaware even of his own sense of alienation.

This is of course a generalisation. But one only has to look, for example, at the abstracts of papers presented at the recent Tenth Annual Congress of Psychology Students of Ireland in Belfast to see how dominant a role is taken by research on the conditioning of the human organism and how minimal a place is given to studies which would enable psychologists to search for an understanding of the lives of human beings that goes beyond the ritualistic formulas of our political and religious leaders.

This is not to reproach the students. For how could it be otherwise when recently an authority speaking at a seminar on sexual problems in Dublin was reported as saying that the reason for the overwhelming male incidence of sexual deviations such as fetishism, transvestism, paedophilia, sadism and incest was that the development of the brain in men gave scope for errors in

of the male sexual deviant as a flawed computer which persistently refuses to accept the instructions that are fed into him by society to the effect that, for example, it is bad form to choose the molestation of children as the way of satisfying your sexual needs. Human sexuality is the despair of behaviorism and it is surely not by accident that the flaws in Huxley's brave new world begin to show with the appearance of a woman (*mirabile dictul*) who demonstrates a taste for perverse sexual practices.

I am not saying that training in social or self-management skills is a bad thing or that conditioning techniques have not been of enormous value in the work of psychologists as well as in helping nurses, teachers and others in the helping professions approach their jobs more effectively. But do they represent the core of the psychologists social mission? Do they not in a sense betray one of the major responsibilities that the psychologist has *vis-d-vis* the community because they are not supported and guided by the sophisticated psychological understanding of the human being that I have been talking about?

THE PSYCHOANALYST AS PSYCHOLOGIST?

Not all psychologists are unhappy with the science and profession of psychology as it exists and those who are—I am thinking of people like David Smail (1986) with his analysis of the mechanisation of human experience—seem to me to despair of any scientific attempt to understand and to point us more in the direction of existentialist philosophy to ground our theory and to decency and humaneness as guides for our practice. I am not denying the wisdom of such an approach to living one's own life and to counselling others, but I would argue that a science of the human subject does exist and that its relevance to the problems that we have been discussing has been largely ignored by psychologists.

Psychoanalysis, as transmitted to many of us in the standard textbooks, has made of itself an unenviable set of theories which were presented as dogmas, practices that seemed intuitionist and obscurantist, and ethical principles derived largely from notions of happiness and egoistic self-fulfilment difficult to maintain outside a Madison Avenue advertisement. So for the remainder of this lecture I would like to explain why I believe that psychoanalysis does offer a way forward and incidentally try to say why I think psychoanalysis has acquired such a bad press with psychologists.

I would like first of all to be clear about the title of this paper. Sixty years ago in the context of a debate on lay analysis, which we will have reason to come back to, Theodor Reik wrote: "The psychoanalyst is above all a psychologist, whatever else he may be, physician, teacher, jurist, pastor. . . analysis will exist as an essential part of psychology or not at all" (Reik,

for psychoanalysis. Psychology as we know has never refused psychoanalysis its place among the theories of personality that any self-respecting psychologist should know about, just as psychiatric textbooks include a subsection on psychoanalysis as one among many possible forms of therapy.

In calling my paper "The psychologist as psychoanalyst" and in subtitling it "the proper study of mankind" I was trying to suggest that this is no longer a satisfactory state of affairs either from the theoretical, the practical or the ethical point of view. The question of the position that psychologists should take up in relation to psychoanalysis is important and urgent and I do not apologise for bringing it to your attention. But what I must apologise for in advance is the inadequacy of the way in which I will be able to treat it—not only because of lack of time and my own incapacities but also because of the complexity of the issues involved. All I can hope for is that you will agree with the crucial nature of the question and that you will bring your own knowledge and experience to bear on the issue of whether there is a case for recentring the aims and methods of psychology in the light of the discoveries of psychoanalysis.

The psychoanalysis we have learnt is generally speaking not Freudian analysis but rather an adaptation of Freud to the demands of the American market. J.B. Watson, the founder of behaviorism, was also one of the great popularisers of psychoanalysis in the United States. The trivialisation produced by the mass diffusion of inaccurate psychoanalytic ideas might have been countered by a serious study of this new psychology in the universities. But this was made much less likely by the fact that psychoanalysis was not a career option for a psychologist in America. Defying Freud at every step of the way, American analysts have, since the 1920's, succeeded in making of psychoanalysis a sub-speciality of psychiatry. Only very rare and exceptional non-medical graduates were accepted for training in the American branches of the International Psychoanalytic Association and then only after having given an undertaking that they would use their training for research and never for the purpose of engaging in psychoanalytic treatment.

This Americanisation and medicalisation of psychoanalysis meant, I believe, that a momentous step forward in the properly psychological understanding of man was put off-limits for psychologists. Psychology developed largely as an experimental science and as a profession concerned with assessment and behavioural analysis and came to be taught as such in universities throughout the English-speaking world. And it did not miss psychoanalysis. This hard-headed approach brought it to a position of enormous power, especially in the United States, while the ghetto mentality of psychoanalysis brought about a corresponding diminution in the respect given to psychoanalysis as a psychological science.

Trained in this American school I recall how resistant I was to abandoning

when, after some years of psychological assessment, career guidance and teaching courses based on the work of such diverse figures as Anne Anastasi, Michael Argyle, Erik Erikson and Carl Rogers, I first encountered in France the challenges of psychoanalytic supervision. "Why deprive yourself," I would argue with my supervisor, "of knowledge that could be precious to the client and to yourself in your joint attempt to bring some order into a painfully disordered life?" And I was even able to refer to the light I had brought to a psychiatrist who had been struggling in an analytic-type therapy with a very well turned out young lady by demonstrating that her Full Scale WAIS score was in the low seventies.

It took me some considerable time to realise the truth of the analytic proposition most clearly articulated by Jacques Lacan (1951) that once you had started on the path of objectifying the psychological attributes of the individual before you, whether by a WAIS or an MMPI or even a Rorschach, there was no way that you could enter into the sort of dialogue that allowed that person to articulate his or her own subjective position. And that in the absence of such a dialogue there was no way that the individual could begin to overcome that alienation of his or her desire which from the psychoanalytic point of view is at the root of the suffering that had brought them to you.

A PSYCHOLOGY OF THE SPEAKING SUBJECT

When you invite someone to speak—just like that: "Speak to me!"—you can never predict the effect that your invitation will have and for that reason you have no way of anticipating what you are going to be called on to listen to: a complaint, a declaration of love, silence, or even a lecture.

The fact that an open invitation to speak elicits an unpredictable response forms the basis of what has been called the psychoanalytic situation—the psychoanalyst is in the first instance someone who invites the person who comes to him, or to her, to speak and by the openness of that invitation provides a setting in which the subject who takes it up may be surprised at what he finds himself saying and even more surprised at the fact that the saying, when it is addressed to someone who listens from a certain apparently artificial position, can, in the happiest outcome, replace a repetitive and highly predictable symptom.

This focus on the evoking of an unpredictable human response may seem to remove psychoanalysis from the field of the psychological sciences and place it firmly with poetry, drama and rhetoric. It may also seem to question its credentials as an instrument of healing to be used by serious professionals. People who have a personal problem, whether or not it has reached the stage of being described as an illness, surely have a right when they approach an expert to put themselves in the hands of this expert and to rely on knowledge

reassuring when the expert gives proof of expertise by employing up-to-date assessment procedures and by confidently choosing from among the range of therapeutic procedures the one most adapted to your particular case. It can equally be quite unsettling, especially in the state of alienation with regard to speech that is promoted by our technological civilization, when the expert does not display technical mastery and instead gives pride of place to your word by inviting you to say whatever occurs to you without even guiding you in your choice of subjects.

It was natural, then, that psychoanalysis, especially in the decades following Freud's death and more especially in places where Anglo-American empiricism and positivism held sway, should have tried to regain that scientific status by adopting the objective methods of 'scientific' psychology. It transformed itself into the schematic, instinctual, abstract theory that we all know from our textbooks on personality theories and renounced its own methods in an attempt to justify its theses in attitude surveys and experiments with animal learning—remember the experimentally induced animal neuroses (e.g., Masserman, 1944)—while forgetting the centrality of speech and language and the dimension of unconscious desire that necessarily accompanies them.

FREUD AND LACAN

It took Jacques Lacan (1901-1981), who in many ways can best be understood as the second founder of psychoanalysis, to reassert throughout fifty years of teaching, of experimentation with the psychoanalytic method and finally of political activity with regard to the presence of psychoanalysis in the university, that what Freud had discovered was another way of approaching the human subject which remained scientific while at the same time not excluding the uniquely human phenomena of speech and language but rather putting them at the centre of its concerns.

Lacan (1953) has shown—especially in his rereading of Freud's great case histories and of his work on dreams, parapraxes and wit—that what we see here are the experiments and conjectures of a great thinker and scientific explorer, a veritable Galileo in the field of mental science, and that far from being a record of aimless dialogues with over-indulged Viennese matrons they were the first steps in the inauguration of the first proper science of the human subject. "Before Freud," Lacan argued, "the whole study of human affairs arose to a greater or lesser extent from a concern about morality, or ethics, in the sense that it was less of a question of studying desire than from the outset reducing and disciplining it" (Lacan, 1958). Freud discovered a scientific method which respected concrete human subjectivity and the unconscious desire that is at its core and also showed that this could not be explored without taking into account the subjectivity and the desire of the

Psychologists' views about Freud are ambivalent. Some years ago the British Psychological Society carried out a survey to find out who its members considered to have been the greatest of their race and found not surprisingly that Freud was overwhelmingly the chosen one, with most of the other great names being very much also rans. Yet there is also a widespread consensus among psychologists that this great genius of the human mind did not know what he was about. Freud believed and repeatedly stated that he had discovered a new scientific method—often contrasting it for example with the experimentalism of Wilhelm Wundt—and that he had taken the first faltering steps in the use of that method to explore the mysteries of the human mind; but in this psychologists do not follow him.

Lacan argued that the reason why Freud's claim was not taken seriously was that the prestige of the experiment in the modern philosophy of science, epitomised by the neo-Humean writings of Sir Karl Popper (1957), had led to a narrowing of the definition of what could be called science. Lacan's work was certainly to ask what had to be done with psychoanalysis, what deviations had to be denounced, what formalisations introduced, what mystifications dissipated, in order for it to become a science, but it was also to question science, especially psychological science, regarding the changes it in turn had to accept in order to accommodate this new science of psychoanalysis.

In its efforts to guarantee scientific respectability, psychology, even more than the physics on which it modeled itself, has made itself a slave to the experiment. Max Born, one of the great founders of modern physics, could say in the 1930's that theoretical physics was really a branch of metaphysics and admit that it did not deal with reality in the empirical sense of the word, but again it took Lacan (1950) to argue that psychosis was a way of thinking and to run the risk of being accused of philosophising by describing psychoanalysis as a conjectural, rather than an empirical, science.

I would like to suggest that, at a time when the nature of psychoanalysis has been restated and formalised by Lacan in a way that has shaken the International Psychoanalytic Association to its foundations, it is appropriate for psychologists to look again at what they may have to learn from psychoanalysis. One could go further and say that the time may be appropriate for a realigning of the categories of the human sciences in order to allow for the emergence of a psychology which would have the proper study of the human subject as its main goal and which because of this would subordinate all the methods of human psychology to this over-riding imperative that they should respect above all the need to do nothing that promotes the dehumanisation of man. Psychology in general instead of being at the service of the manipulators might follow the example of psychoanalysis in defining itself above all in terms of the means that it refuses to make use of and the goals that it refuses to serve.

LANGUAGE AND DESIRE IN HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY

I think it must be abundantly clear by now that I am not advocating an indiscriminate adoption of everything that describes itself as psychoanalysis. This calls for some brief explication of the particular psychoanalytic position, the Freudian/Lacanian one, which in my view best situates the place of the human being in the world and which orders its theories, its practices and its ethics in this light.

Psychoanalysis does not begin, as psychology has hitherto begun, with the study of the experience and behaviour of organisms and with the human organism being taken as a particular case. It begins with the pre-existence of a symbolic order on which the very emergence of the human being depends. At a first approximation this symbolic order represents all the elements from which the language, laws and customs of a particular familial, community or national culture may be formed and it is into it that the individual human being is born.

Human beings are defined as such not to the degree that they can relate animal-fashion, physiologically, to the *Umwelt*, the natural environment that is necessary to sustain physical existence (Freud uses the word *Instinkt* only once in his published works) but to the extent that they orient themselves in some way with respect to the signs and symbols that are the essence of this symbolic order. And they do this not in a self-generated system of signs that emerges as it were from the inner core of their central nervous systems, but by learning to express their needs in the fundamentally alienating set of signifiers that is provided by their mother tongue. To be, for a human being, is to be beings of language. Outside of language they do not even exist. And Heidegger's (1959) affirmation of this position provides a fundamental justification for Freud's entire dependence on the spoken word in his 'talking cure'.

I have used the word 'learning' just now, but the core of Freud's discovery is that human learning is of a very particular type. It is not a matter of adaptation and assimilation by the young organism to the social situation; it is rather the inscription in the unconscious of a form of linguistic structuring that the child is unaware of having acquired. There is a properly human requirement that needs have to be expressed in a language given him by another—usually in the first instance by the mother—and it is this that sets the child off on the peculiarly human mode of development in which he is dependent on the desires of others to reach the objects of his own desire. In this way the young human being comes to desire not just objects that can serve biological needs—such as nutrition—but the very desire of the person to whom he is addressing himself. Human history, whether considered from an individual or a global point of view, is less the history of trying to satisfy needs than of desiring desires.

colleague who was treating a rather atypical anorectic patient in her mid-thirties. Needless to say this anorectic had been quite a trial for her husband who was a countryman normally blessed with a great fund of patience. But one day he came from the patient's bedside to tell the doctor how he had been trying to reason with his wife: "I said to her 'Mary-Anne: horses eat oats, monkeys eat nuts, and *people eat food!* Now would you for God's sake stop your nonsense and eat your bloody dinner!'"

The problem is that people do not eat food—at least not in the sense that horses eat oats and monkeys eat nuts. And the most precious lessons that our anorectics and our other neurotic and psychotic patients teach us by their rejection of the usual norms is that in the final analysis human desire is not something that can be trifled with or disregarded in the organisation of the family or of society. This is what Freud discovered and he searched for the trace of desire in the areas of existence that are most disregarded in the world of empiricism and positivism—dreams, symptoms, slips of the tongue and jokes. But "the trouble with Freud's theories," as a behaviorist friend once remarked, "is that they are not testicle!" unwittingly providing, in this way, a fine sample of the very type of linguistic material on the basis of which Freud had constructed—and tested—his science.

This will have to serve as our brief glimpse at the foundations of Lacan's rereading of Freud. The story of how the human subject is captivated by his one image on his journey towards language, the ways in which his speech may remain an empty and alienated speech rather than progressing to full speech, the risks involved in the assumption of a male or female identity, the various ways in which desire may deviate towards perversion or neurosis or character disorder or psychosis, the consequences of these and other questions for the conduct of an analysis—all of this would demand a much fuller treatment. But these chapter headings already give some indication of the vastness of the field of analysis; a field that in fact no single individual can any longer claim to master in all its theoretical and technical detail. The need for the cooperation of many individuals in this task of articulating psychoanalysis in our own concrete situation here in Ireland is one of the reasons why I thought it worth while to bring this subject before you today. And I am happy to be able to refer you to evidence for the tentative beginnings of such work in some articles recently published in Ireland (e.g., Gallagher, 1986; Nolan & O'Mahony, 1987).

Let me conclude then with some practical remarks on the practice and teaching of psychoanalysis.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST AS PSYCHOANALYST

The question of the rights of psychologists to treat patients without medical

research of Joseph Robins (1986) in his recently published *Fools and mad—a history of the insane in Ireland* I came across perhaps the first discussion of the issue in this country in an article by Edward Boyd Barrett on 'Modern psychotherapy and our asylums' which appeared in *Studies* in 1924. Fresh from a training in the psychological laboratories of Louvain Boyd Barrett argues the benefits of a type of cognitive-behavioural therapy *a la* Pierre Janet for many patients who, if treated by merely medical or custodial means, were destined to face a lifetime of institutionalisation.

However his arguments were to have little practical effect against a prevailing ethos well summarised perhaps by a contemporary Irish psychiatrist, also referred to by Robins, who during his studies in Vienna in the 1920's attended lectures by Freud and could only report that "he was a little bit above my head." The suspicion surrounding these new ideas was borne out when Boyd Barrett left the Jesuits, the priesthood and Ireland and only reemerged from what he himself called "the mist" in the early 1950's.

In 1926, Theodor Reik, a prominent non-medical member of the Vienna Psychoanalytical Society was charged, following an accusation by one of his patients, with a breach of the old Austrian law against quackery, a law which made it illegal for a person without a medical degree to treat patients. The charge was dismissed, largely owing to Freud's intervention, but this event was the occasion for Freud to deal at some length with the topic that perhaps most preoccupied him in the last years of his life: the question of the lay, or non-medical nature of psychoanalysis. On no issue was he more bitterly divided from some of his most prominent followers, especially as we have seen in the USA, than on this question of whether or not the practice of psychoanalysis should be the prerogative of the medical profession.

It would be wrong to see this stance as a negative anti-medical one, an attempt to save psychoanalysis from the doctors. In fact Freud argued that it served the interests of doctors—as well as that of his patients and of science—that lay analysis should be the norm. Freud himself, and most of his followers and pupils, were doctors, but he argued that it would be an intolerable extra burden for those who wished in the future to become analysts to be obliged to acquire, for example, "a knowledge of the anatomy of the tarsal bones, of the constitution of the carbohydrates, of the course of the cranial nerves, a grasp of all that medicine has brought to light on the bacillary exciting causes of disease" and so on (Freud, 1927). It would be an interesting exercise to see what could be pruned from a typical psychology course if it were to adopt the postulates of psychoanalysis. But it is not simply a question of pruning. Freud's main stress was on the extensive positive knowledge, the rigorous training (including a personal analysis) and the high ethical qualities that any non-medical person needs to acquire if he is not to be a charlatan or a purveyor of simplistic solutions to psychological

problems that are in fact extremely difficult to understand and still more difficult to treat.

In his college of psychoanalysis—a notion that he admitted sounded fantastic in the 1920's—Freud saw the need for some of the subjects already being taught in medical schools: "Alongside of depth-psychology, which would always remain the principal subject, there would be an introduction to biology, as much as possible of the science of sexual life, and familiarity with the symptomatology of psychiatry" (Freud, 1927). But in addition to these he would include other apparently remote branches of knowledge such as "the history of civilization, mythology, the psychology of religion, and the science of literature" (*ibid.*).

How many psychologists have taken seriously the claim of this undisputed master of the art that unless he is well at home in these subjects the therapist will be able to make nothing of a large amount of the material his patients present to him.

"For my part," says Lacan, "I should be inclined to add: rhetoric, dialectic in the technical sense that this term assumes in the *Topics* of Aristotle, grammar, and, that supreme pinnacle of the aesthetics of language, poetics, which would include the neglected technique of the witticism" (Lacan, 1953).

I cannot speak about the situation in other parts of the world, but I know that in Paris two distinct departments of psychoanalysis have emerged over the last 15 years or so taking these aspirations as their guideline. In one case, if I understand the situation correctly, it is the traditional Sorbonne professorship of psychology which has been split to allow for the designation of a professor of psychoanalysis; in the other case a new department of almost entirely Lacanian inspiration has grown up in one of the new University of Paris colleges which were created in the late sixties and early seventies.

The link between undergraduate courses in psychoanalysis and clinical work is of course problematic and gives rise to many unresolved difficulties. While the departments of psychoanalysis are largely staffed by practicing analysts, this is by no means always the case, and students are of course instructed that they will have to follow the course of training prescribed by one of the professional bodies—which involves a personal analysis and supervision—if they wish to work as psychoanalysts. However in all of this their situation is probably no more problematic than that of many students trained in non-analytic psychology, and the relationship of modern psychoanalysis to so many of the other disciplines, from theology through literature and anthropology to mathematics, ensures a certain breadth of culture which can serve as a preparation for many non-clinical pursuits. Indeed one of the most remarkable aspects of the Lacan vogue that at present seems to be sweeping the USA is the presence at analytic conferences of so many teachers and students from disciplines other than the traditional clinical ones.

responding to the demands which I earlier suggested were legitimately addressed to psychology by other disciplines.

THE ETHICS OF DESIRE

Somewhere at the heart of all of this there is the question of the desire of the particular individual who wishes to present himself or herself as an analyst and more generally the whole question of the ethics of psychoanalysis and the consequences for ethics in general of the new perspectives on human desire opened up by Freud's discoveries.

To illustrate a year-long (1959-1960) series of seminars on the ethics of psychoanalysis Lacan took Sophocles' story of Antigone, the daughter of (Edipus, who defied the power of the state, embodied in the tyrant Creon, in order to bury her brother, choosing herself to be buried alive rather than yield on what to her was a moral imperative that went beyond the edicts of society. The fact that psychoanalysis sets out to allow people to articulate their desires and to see the fundamental cause of their psychological disturbances in their alienation from their own desires has always been a scandal for those who see this as a deification of the whim of the individual. Experience shows however that it is only with the greatest reluctance that individuals come to admit to their desires and that in fact the most crucial desires are unavowable because they are unconscious. "Follow your feelings" or "Do whatever makes you feel OK" are not psychoanalytic precepts. "Be faithful to the desire that dwells within you" is.

The accusation of bourgeois individualism which was one of the reasons for the exclusion of psychoanalysis from the Eastern block in favour of Pavlov's more socially useful methods was eloquently rebutted in the early sixties, not by a psychoanalyst but by the Marxist intellectual Louis Althusser (1964) in a seminal article entitled "Freud and Lacan".

This is not to say that all the questions about the theory, the practice and the ethics of psychoanalysis have been answered. If, as I have been suggesting, psychoanalysis is a science, or is at least struggling to become one, its value is not to be sought in its capacity to bring the questioning of the investigator to a halt but rather in its potential for showing how it is possible to approach certain impossible human difficulties that otherwise might lead to despair.

When he was over seventy and ten years into the cancer of the jaw that would eventually kill him, Freud wrote in a letter to Reik: "Although I agree with your judgement about the world and the present race of human beings I cannot, as you know, regard your pessimistic rejection of a better future as justifiable" (Jones, 1958, p.460). What we owe to Freud is that he honestly faced the darkest side of our nature and still managed to retain some hope for the future of humanity.

CONCLUSION

Given the appalling economic difficulties that currently threaten our health and education services and with them the professional existence of many of our members, this morning I may have seemed to some of you to have been rearranging the deckchairs on the *Titanic* rather than addressing myself to matters of real importance. But surely the root cause of our social and economic difficulties is that we work with an image of men and women that increasingly subordinates them to a rationalistic and technological view of the world. It is that world view that by and large psychology presently services, but I have been proposing that psychologists are in fact in a privileged position to offer an alternative view of what it means to construct a world fit for human beings to live and to flourish in.

The *Titanic* came to grief because of an unthinking reliance on technology. What I have been arguing is that it is possible to redesign the craft of psychology not in a way that would pretend to make it proof against all fear of shipwreck but in a way that will enable us to navigate the treacherous seas of the human spirit buoyed up by a sure belief that our cause is a worthy one because we are supporting freedom and dignity rather than claiming to go beyond them.

In this we can certainly look to Freud for our bearings; but perhaps we should also, like him, not disdain more ancient reference points and in particular the dialectical method of Socrates and the spirit that led him to affirm that in his questioning of human desire he was ignorant of everything but *Eros*.

That spirit which is so overlooked in the contemporary mechanisation of the human subject has received a memorable and appropriate expression in Patrick Kavanagh's 'Prelude' (1972):

**So now my gentle tiger burning
In the forest of no-yearning
Walk on serenely, do not mind
The Promised Land you thought to find.
Where the worldly-wise and rich take over
The mundane problems of the lover.
Ignore Power's schismatic sect,
Lovers alone lovers protect.**

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(Accepted for publication November 1987)