In these pages ...

PSYCHOANALYSIS AND PHILOSOPHY: NURTURING DIALOGUES

Since its inception more than a hundred years ago, psychoanalysis has been intermittently accompanied by ambivalence about its relationship with philosophy. Whether to continue the confrontations of the past or seek to reorient our mutual perspectives about the other is my question. In lieu of reductionist critiques and disputes about hegemony, I propose a *nurturing dialogue* as psychoanalysis and philosophy move forward, keeping in mind that while we are not necessarily bound by the past neither can we ignore that which in many ways defines the present.

The relationship between psychoanalysis and philosophy had its roots in Freud's early interest in philosophy that began even before commencing his medical education. Although the requirement to take a philosophy course had been dropped, Freud nevertheless attended philosophical lectures from 1874 to 1875, given by the eminent Viennese philosopher Franz Brentano, a noted Aristotle scholar at the University of Vienna. Inspired by Brentano, Freud read Aristotle and wrote to his boyhood friend Eduard Silberstein: "under Brentano's fruitful influence I have arrived at the decision to take my Ph.D. in philosophy and zoology" (Freud to Silberstein on March 7, 1875, p. 95). Later in life Freud also read other philosophers, such as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, although he remained ambivalent about the intellectual debt he owed to Nietzsche (Kramer, 2012, p. 346).

Philosophical critiques of psychoanalysis abound. For the most part, they seek to convince the practitioners of psychoanalysis about the shortcomings not only of their theoretical foundations but also of the validity of their practice. These critiques have come for the most part from philosophers of science (i.e., Earnest Nagel, 1961; Karl Popper, 1963 and Alfred Grünbaum, 2006). Even philosophers such as Wittgenstein and Thomas Nagel who are not philosophers of science have borrowed arguments from the philosophy of science to critique psychoanalysis.

Critiques have also come from philosophers whose orientation is phenomenological (Heidegger, 1927, 1965), existential (Sartre, 1943), hermeneutic (Ricoeur, 1970), political and social (Adorno, 1973), (Habermas, 1972) and philosophical (Frie, 2002; Mills, 2003; Thompson, 2006).

Psychoanalysis from its early beginnings has had its internal critics as well, and many have challenged orthodox Freudian psychoanalysis; for

example, Otto Rank (Rank, 1929; Dupont, 2012), Sándor Ferenczi (Ferenczi, 1930; Boschan, 2011), Wilhelm Reich (1926), Karen Horney (Horney, 1939; Rendon, 1991; Rubin, 2010), Harry Stack Sullivan (Conci, 2010), Erich Fromm (1964), Rycroft (Borgogno, 2010), Klein (1969), Deleuze and Guattari (1972), Gill (1976), Schafer (1976, 1978) and Lacan (1977).

I do not intend to revisit the questions whether psychoanalysis is a science or a hermeneutical enterprise, having discussed this earlier (Appelbaum, 2011). Neither do I wish to rebut the philosophical arguments proffered by the philosophers of science, principally those of Grünbaum and Popper, having taken that up recently (Appelbaum, 2012). My intent is rather to bracket these concerns in order to point to a more nurturing dialogue between psychoanalysis and philosophy.

Bracketing the past is not forgetting the past. It is the recognition that our conceptualizations are not written in stone as exemplars of Forms residing in a Platonic heaven endlessly to be revisited as in Nietzsche's eternal return of the same. Conceptualizations do not arise *ex nihilo*, nor do they come to us fully developed as Athena emerged from the head Zeus. They are rooted in the *Zeitgeist* of the time in which they are conceived. No single philosophical viewpoint can present a *Weltanschauung* that encompasses the descriptive totality of our dynamic culture as is exemplified by the diversity of philosophical theories. Psychoanalysis can do no better than philosophy has done for its principal concerns.

A nurturing dialogue between psychoanalysis and philosophy entails and is rooted in a consideration of the commonality of their principal concerns. The stated concerns of both disciplines define the space and the scope of the dialogue. The scope limitations of the dialogue are flexible in their concerns about the centrality of individual humans and humanity as a whole. One of the things that psychoanalysis and philosophy *can* do together and each in their own way is to foster a goal that lessens the pains inherent in existence both for individuals and for the society as a whole. In so doing, the psychoanalyst and the philosopher relate to each other as coequals that recognize not only what divides them but also what unites them in a common humanistic effort forged in the furnace of the enlightenment and continued in and past the postmodern future.

In my view, when considering their relationship to philosophy, psychoanalysts have often been defensive. Psychoanalysis is a *unique* discipline as is philosophy. Psychoanalytic theories and practice have influenced not only the arts and literature but also our everyday social culture. Given the development and the contributions of psychoanalysis during more than one hundred years, it is now time for psychoanalysts to affirm that its relation to philosophy is one of nurturing *dialogue*. Furthermore, this dialogue is a symmetrical one. What we dialogue about is the exchange of philosophical

and psychoanalytic ideas from different perspectives. This special issue of the *American Journal of Psychoanalysis* recognizes and affirms that both psychoanalysis and philosophy are wellsprings of mutual inspiration, to be developed by each separate discipline according to their own guiding lights.

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