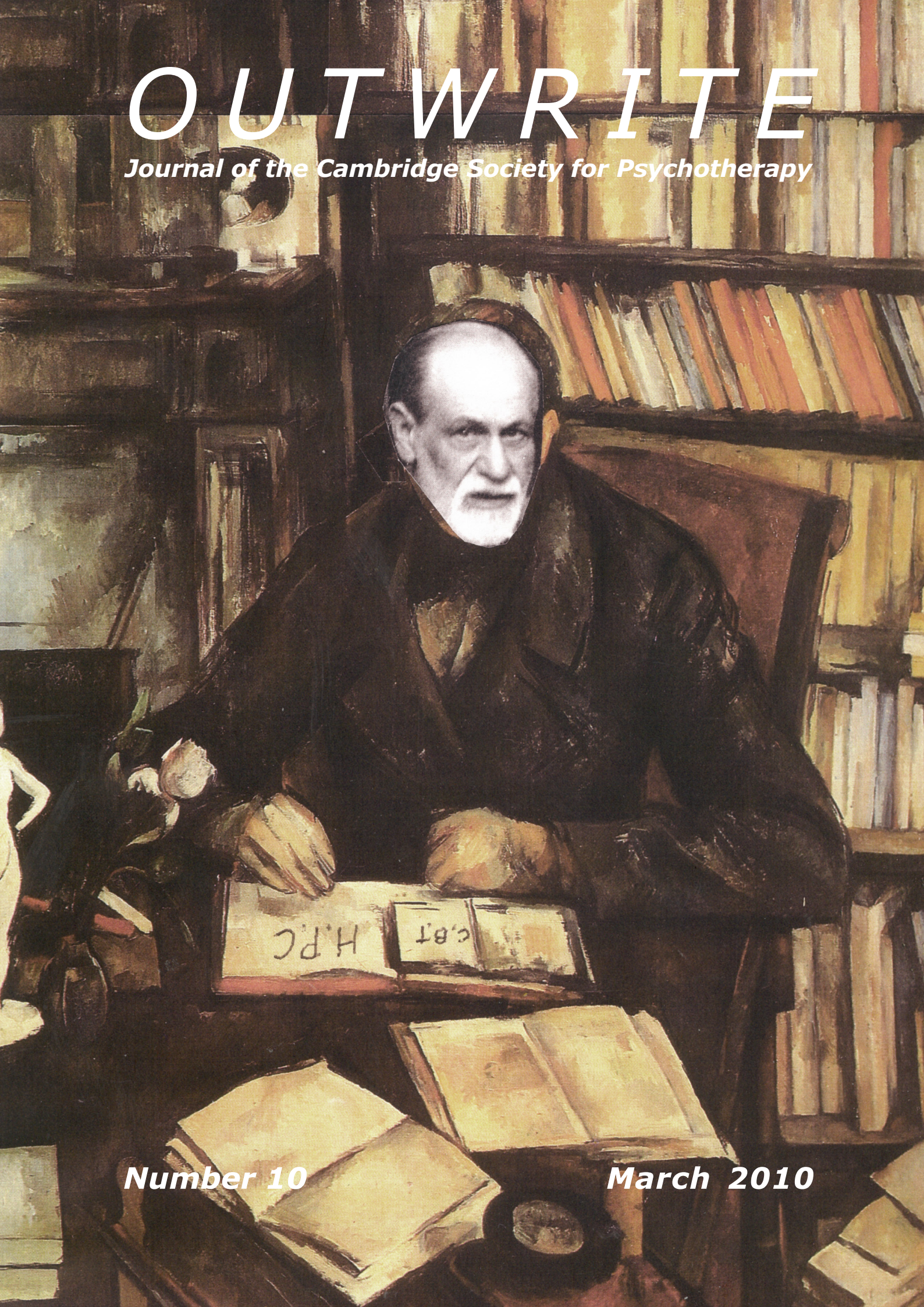
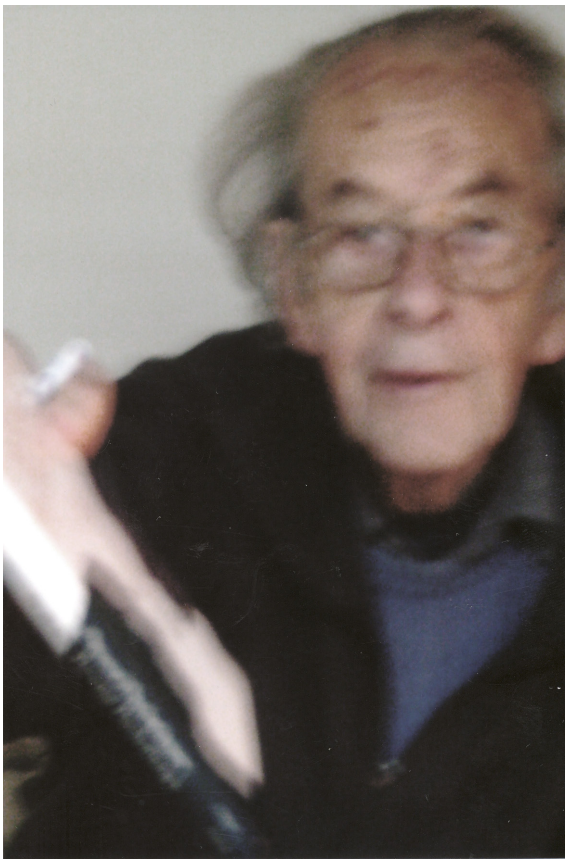
OUTWRITE

Journal of the Cambridge Society for Psychotherapy



Number 10 *March 2010*

Peter Lomas
1923 - 2010



O U T W R I T E

Journal of the Cambridge Society for Psychotherapy
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Illustrations for poems: Dorn Parkinson
Front cover : Cover design by Michael Evans with apologies to Paul Cezanne
Inside front cover: photographs by Michael Evans
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Editorial

This is not the edition that we had planned for January 2010.

Our thoughts were to continue with the theme of various aspects of child development, and also the sibling relationships within the UKCP and the politics of psychotherapy. Across these plans fell the news of Peter's death, and so we are also offering contributions responding to this. We start with four photographs taken by Michael during a recent conversation with Peter, which we feel are evocative of Peter's way of being with people.

Lucy King introduces this section with thoughts about Peter's role in the Outfit and in the world of psychotherapy, with emphasis on the strength of Peter's care and caring. Sian Morgan wrote a brief obituary to be circulated in the Guild and has expanded it to include her personal recollections. We are pleased to be able to include the talk Michael Evans gave at the service of celebration for Peter's life. David Ingleby links his reactions to Peter's death with an appreciation of his position in the political and theoretical sphere. To this effect, Michael Evans' front cover suggests, in a condensed and powerful way, the yawning gap between the aims of psychoanalysis and the compromises we are being forced to make. Finally, in this section, we include Peter's Seven Rules of Psychotherapy, lest we take ourselves too seriously.

Caroline Nielson offers a selection of her current poems, several of them reflecting on her work with patients, and Dorn Parkinson's illustrations offer a visual accompaniment. We include two of our planned articles about child development and child psychotherapy. Margaret Farrell looks at the largely neglected topic of siblings, and the effects on children. Sian Morgan shares her research on the life and work of Françoise Dolto, a child psychoanalyst extremely well known in France, now brought to wider attention for English speakers – Sian is the joint editor with Françoise Hivernel and Guy Hall, of *Theory and Practice in Child Psychoanalysis: an introduction to the work of Françoise Dolto* (2009), published by Karnac. Finally, Michael Evans offers us rich meditations around painting and psychotherapy.

Our thanks to all who have contributed to this edition of *Outwrite*; to Diana and Jon Lomas for the Seven Rules of Psychotherapy; to Michael Evans for the cover and for the four photographs of Peter; to all involved for encouragement and advice. Elitian Printers have once again been most helpful. Contributions for the next edition are welcome.

Jenny Corrigall and Marie Pepper
March 2010

Lucy King

Peter Lomas 1923 - 2010

As we all within the Outfit so painfully know, Peter died at home on Tuesday January 12th. Although he had been increasingly unwell over the past couple of years and unable to attend meetings of the Outfit, his interest and concern about it and the individuals within it never flagged. He remained passionate about the practice of psychotherapy and the training of its practitioners. It had been this that led him first to leave the Institute of Psychoanalysis and then later, the Guild of Psychotherapy that he himself had founded but which he felt was developing in ways he couldn't endorse. The Outfit was therefore his second attempt to set up a group that would embody his enduring convictions about how, and equally how not, to enhance the learning of apprentice psychotherapists. Not so much a training, as *a learning* group. Even its unofficial name, the Outfit was the result of his dislike of more conventional titles that seem to be ways of seeking authority and status. It started as a throw away jokey epithet that has somehow stuck and spread out into widespread use even outside the group.

Peter was well known for his conviction that aptitude to become a psychotherapist did not depend on a person's educational or social background. This led many to assume that he was somehow anti-intellectual and that he did not value serious reading or ideas. I think that this was a mistake. Certainly he believed that we may become captivated by theory and lose touch with more down to earth but vital ways of responding to people's distress. This did not mean, however, that he did not continue to read widely or think deeply and carefully. Maybe it is this last word that gives a clue to something that was so important to all of us who knew him, worked with him, learned from him (directly or indirectly). It is that he continued always to *care*, about us, his patients, his friends and family, about the professions, about all sorts of aspects of the world. There were many things he worried about and that could make him sound gloomy and full of foreboding but despite this he never gave up. He never stopped caring.

Sian Morgan

Peter Lomas: an obituary

I first met Peter in the autumn of 1979. He had just moved to Cambridge from Sussex. His arrival in Cambridge happened to coincide with the sudden death of Bernard Zeitlyn, who had been a consultant psychotherapist and psychiatrist. Bernard and Peter had trained at the Institute of Psychoanalysis at the same time and it was a fortuitous coincidence that brought Peter to Cambridge just after Bernard was killed in a road accident, leaving his family, his colleagues and his patients bereft. Peter was able to take on several of Bernard's patients, including me.

I had struggled with many tragic losses in my immediate family, so Bernard's death felt like a horrible repetition. I was shocked and not inclined to repeat the experience of having psychotherapy. I remember the day when I changed my mind; I shall be forever grateful to Martin Richards, whom I met at Newnham Croft School Sports' Day, for suggesting to me that I go to Peter for an initial consultation. I don't remember much about that initial meeting, except that I felt contained by Peter's consulting room and the warmth of his presence. I know that he was quite challenging to me immediately, suggesting gently that although my grief was raw and justified, that I also might be clinging to it as a means of maintaining a sense of specialness. He succeeded in calming me, both by acknowledging my most primitive sense of abandonment and alienation but also by limiting my rage. Trust was an issue I struggled with: trust that Peter would stay alive for long enough to see me through the psychotherapy. He did that and far more.

Peter came from Manchester where he worked as a G.P. for many years before training at the Institute of Psychoanalysis. He was taught by, amongst others, Melanie Klein and Michael Balint and supervised by Winnicott and Marion Milner.

He worked at the Cassell Hospital, as a consequence of which he became interested in the plight of post-natally depressed women, writing many seminal papers on the subject. He maintained that a fear of envy was at the root of the depressed feelings that can overwhelm new mothers; that along with the personal antecedents of disturbance, depression arises from the envious appropriation of childbirth by a culture that medicalises a natural process. This was a subject close to his heart, taken up by his wife, Diana and daughter, Sally in the Birthlight Trust. When I last talked with Peter he told me that he had started to write another book, on how psychotherapy was like natural childbirth. I wondered at the time whether he was also struggling with the challenge of death, finding hope and a means of letting go in the powerful metaphor of natural childbirth.

Peter had an acute analytic mind; one had the sense that he could look into the psyche and quickly grasp its structure.

He was both a gifted therapist and writer. Peter was a consummate clinician with deeply disturbed patients. Like Winnicott, he was an explorer and observer of the 'borderline', with a considerable understanding and tolerance of madness. He was also a very affectionate human being who through his acceptance of and devotion to his patients was able to relieve them of shame and anguish.

Peter's abiding concern was with the ethics of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, with the power of the therapist and the possibilities for abusing that power. In the late 1960's, he began to feel that the Institute of Psychoanalysis fetishised psychoanalysis; that psychoanalysis was to be preserved in its purity as a form of religion, with the Institute thinking of itself as superior. He left because he could not abide the snobbery and restricted outlook he perceived as pervading the Institute, an outlook that he felt reinforced without question the inevitable power imbalance between a vulnerable patient, in the thrall of transference, and the analyst/ therapist. He questioned the narcissism of psychoanalysis, its pretentiousness, its tendency towards excessive infantilisation of the patient. To counteract the potential for undue idealisation of the therapist he promoted the idea of the 'ordinariness' of the therapeutic relationship. For Peter, his patient was at the centre of things, respected as an equal. He thought that one of the functions of training was to discourage students from assuming false roles. He was utterly opposed to psychotherapy as a 'technique', but saw the task of psychotherapy as enabling his patients to let go of inappropriate defences, to discover or recover their humanity.

> Our task, in relation to Freud, is to be able to utilize those of his insights and recommendations which make sense to us today without feeling obliged to become converts to his systematisation of healing.' (Lomas, 1981:20)

Peter had considerable humility and humanity. He was not afraid to admit his mistakes. It would be an error to assume that in rejecting the Institute, Peter became a woolly minded humanistic therapist. He had a deep understanding of psychoanalytic theory, with great respect for Freud and a fondness and admiration for Ferenczi. He recommended Ian Suttie's *The Origins of Love and Hate* to trainee psychotherapists. He preferred to see his patients several times a week, for as long as it took, and thought that the experience of in depth psychotherapy was the most important constituent of training.

He had an acutely sensitive and perceptive mind. Some of his thinking was born out of the anti-psychiatry movement but he became as critical of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy as he had been of psychiatry. He was indebted to Winnicott, though was critical of the widespread idealisation of Winnicott and his ideas; he was dubious about the value of therapeutic regression in his later years. He was an existentialist and was influenced by the ideas of Kierkegaard and Martin Buber. He particularly valued the writings of independent thinkers such as Gregory Bateson and Harold Searles. He was himself a wonderful communicator and wrote several books about the experience and process of psychotherapy and the ethics of the endeavour.

The last time that I met with Peter he was concerned with the notion of regression. He was himself fighting to maintain his independence in the face of severe pain brought about by his spine disintegrating and by his weakening heart. He managed to keep working until a few weeks before his death. Our conversation about regression took me back to a passage from an interview with him when he said:

> There is a division isn't there between benign and malignant regression which Balint makes? To me if someone collapses and falls apart there is usually a horrid mixture and I think that the result that comes out is not usually some beautiful new self. But I do think that in the collapse from being a functioning adult self and

> the withdrawal into being somebody rather helpless, there is the potential for new growth... I think occasionally that can be illusory...The major feature seems to me to be the collapse of defences which occurs, so that the person in the present is in the state of a helpless child and is very dependent on those around him. (1999:28)

Peter allowed himself that collapse for the last few weeks of his life and died held by his family who were able to be with him.

I have never been to a funeral that was so full of light. I was reminded in the funeral of the light in Peter's consulting room, in the particularly intense sessions when I felt that he was able to know me as I really am, to get to an innermost essence. Consciousness of our true nature is accompanied by a luminous awareness which is like the sunshine that flooded the chapel on that day.

A therapist's funeral must always be slightly strange for their patients or ex patients; the perceived identity of the therapist is always influenced by transference. No matter how accessible Peter was to his patients there were still many aspects of Peter and his life which were unknown. In his funeral Peter became a slightly different person from the person I had thought I knew. But I no longer feel abandoned. Peter has enabled me to find a way back to my roots without having to resort to regression. I am deeply saddened by the loss of a kind and inspiring colleague but I am comforted and reassured by the legacy of Peter's love and creativity and by the generosity of his family who were able to arrange a funeral which was a spontaneous celebration of Peter's life and being.

Michael Evans

Peter Lomas as a therapist and as a writer: his influence

Peter had a great capacity for bearing suffering ~ his own and that of others. This was the basis of his passionate and single minded belief in the intrinsic worth of the healing relationship that grows between therapist and patient. He abandoned concerns about technique and attitudes of professional detachment, which he regarded as excessively defensive, and potentially damaging. Peter concluded that in order to establish a real relationship with his patients the therapist would have to be prepared to reveal himself, warts and all, as a real person.

He was fully aware of the power of transference and how revealing it can be, but how easily it can be abused. Peter was wary of the infantalising effect of the therapist being 'up there' as an expert in the patient's mind. For him inequalities stood in the way of an ordinary relationship based on mutual respect, in which true spontaneity and free exchange could take place.

However Peter recognised that the relationship between patient and therapist can never be entirely equal. Through openness he tried to make the relationship as ordinary as possible. What he brought as a therapist was warmth, and the long experience of being with people who suffered extremely. He understood how to respond intuitively. He had the gift of making each patient feel that they had a very special relationship with him. He felt that encouragement and love were central for healing.

The concept of the ordinary was important for Peter. Perhaps it came from his northern roots ~ a sort of down to earth acceptance of the frailty of human endeavour and our need for decency and good humour in order to survive and to grow. It was perhaps his most characteristic and original idea.

Peter used ordinary language without recourse to psychoanalytic jargon. In his writing as with his patients he was lucid and economical in his choice of words. He believed it should be possible to discuss complex ideas in a straightforward way. As you read him you can follow his thought processes, hear him arguing with himself, and recognise his steady, individual voice coming off the page. His books illuminate fundamental questions, and they are a joy to read.

Peter was strongly committed to the training of psychotherapists and he was instrumental in setting up the Guild in London. Then as a result of discussions with David Ingleby, the Outfit came into being in Cambridge some 30 years ago in an era when there was an ethos of trust, and more freedom to experiment than there is now. It is based on a long tradition of liberal learning and progressive education.

The central idea is that of a community of therapists, some experienced, others

beginners, who could meet and discuss psychotherapy, each member drawing on their personal experiences of life. The selection of students should not be based on their educational qualifications but on human qualities such as sensitivity, decency, awareness, and so on.

I would say that the Outfit is based on feminist principles of sharing and exchanging ideas. Status has no place and every voice has a chance to be heard and taken seriously. The intention is that individual students take responsibility for their own learning and for the group.

In recent years Peter feared for the Outfit because he felt it was too much compromised by regulatory forces and had lost some of the excitement of the early days. This was a measure of his passionate concern. I used to argue with him that he expected too much if he wanted the Outfit to be both ordinary and extra- ordinary at the same time. He always enjoyed an argument.

Peter was an original thinker whose influence extended far beyond the shores of Cambridge. He has been and will continue to be challenging, and hugely inspirational to many people both here and in the wider world. He was passionately committed to the profession of psychotherapy, to training, to his patients, and to colleagues and friends. We have lost an exceptionally wise and caring man.

25th January 2010

David Ingleby

Theorising the Outfit

A couple of years ago, Peter Lomas invited me to contribute a chapter about the Outfit to a book that was being planned. Later, when it became clear that the book was not going to materialise, he suggested I submit a short piece to *Outwrite* based on the outline I had sent him.

The sad news of Peter's death arrived while I was working on this piece. The Outfit was such an important part of Peter's life that writing about it now feels a bit like writing an obituary for him. For many people, and in many ways, his death leaves a void that will take a long time to heal over. At this time our thoughts go out especially to Diana, whose devotion – particularly in Peter's illness-racked last years – was the mainstay of his life. However, the Outfit and the radical new ways of thinking about psychotherapy which Peter articulated are alive and kicking; and something of Peter's abundant humanity and his challenging spirit lives on in them.

In spite of its title, this article does not pretend to 'explain' the Outfit or the ideas on which it was based, but instead to give a rather personal view of some of the contemporary issues which Peter's work seems to illustrate. Indeed, it would be highly paradoxical to suggest that the Outfit is based on a theory: the fact that it *isn't* is precisely what sets it apart from all other training schools for therapists. Nevertheless, like the rest of Peter's work, it was anything but a purely personal creation, and it certainly didn't arise in an intellectual vacuum.

Around 1980 I spent many enjoyable hours with Peter – usually over a ploughman's lunch and a pint of bitter at the Fort St. George – discussing his ideas and sharing his enthusiasm for the idea of setting up a new kind of programme for training therapists. Both of us were deeply sceptical about professional organisations. However noble the ideals on which such groups were founded, they all too often turned into self-seeking entities whose main interest was in consolidating their own power, while stifling the creativity and individuality of their members. Of course, in return for the years of training and the annual membership fee, they offered good value for money: they sheltered their members from any attacks of anxiety and doubt that might assail them in the small hours of the morning about the value of what they were doing, and bolstered up their conviction that they were 'doing good' (to quote the title of one of Peter's books). But did they actually promote better therapy?

Peter was often seen by his opponents as a kind of anarchist, or at the very least an extreme individualist, with a temperamental inability to appreciate the need for rules and techniques to discipline the work of the therapist. Such people mistakenly assumed that because his ideas arose in the context of the 1960's, his philosophy was one of 'anything goes' –

that the therapist should simply 'do their own thing' and encourage the client to do likewise.

In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Peter's objection to most schools of therapy was not that they were too strict, but that they were not strict enough – in the ways that really matter. The chief obligation he imposed on therapists was that of *sincerity*. Whatever you said or did, you had to believe in it and take responsibility for it yourself. For therapists, there could be no 'Nuremberg defence' ("I was only following orders"): simply appealing to professional rules of good technique or correct procedure would not do. This was because your relationship with the client had to be, at the core, a *personal* one, and techniques of any kind would get in the way of this. As I put it in an earlier article:

> Technique might be acceptable, even compulsory, for a dentist or a surgeon: but the task of the therapist, defined at the most fundamental level, is to help another person rediscover their humanity - to make them feel a human being again. Such a discovery, in Lomas' view, can only be facilitated by offering them a personal relationship. (King, 1999, 139-50)

Of course, this is putting it too simply; there was a lot more to Peter's teaching than that. But his insistence that therapy must be based on ordinary, shared humanity was uncompromising.

As anti-intellectual as this philosophy sounds, Peter did not operate in an intellectual vacuum: he found inspiration in a number of important writers who explored what it means to be a person, and what lies at the heart of a 'personal' relationship. He was also a natural ally of the many twentieth-century writers who have defended these concepts in the face of developments in our culture that threaten to obliterate them.

What follows are some rough notes about certain ideas that seem to me to have important affinities with Peter's approach. To some extent, Peter knew about these ideas and drew from them; but for the most part the affinities were unconscious. Others working in very different areas had felt the same disquiet and come to similar conclusions.

The resistance to instrumental rationality

At the most general level, Peter's ideas and the Outfit itself seem to me to be taking issue with the culture of *instrumental rationality:* the mode of thinking identified by the sociologist Max Weber (1852-1937) as central to the process of modernisation. This type of rationality is purely concerned with the relation between means and ends: it takes the ends for granted, and in that sense is 'value-free'. For Weber, it is the stuff of which the 'Iron Cage of Modernity' is made.

Instrumental rationality is the logic that underlies bureaucracies, but it can be internalised by individuals as well. Being itself 'value-free', it can be used either to further the development of welfare systems, lifesaving medicines and agricultural techniques on the one hand, or genocide, mechanised warfare and weapons of mass destruction on the other. This type of rationality applies scientific models of cause and effect, cost and benefit, to every area of human activity. However, resistance to it is as old as the project of modernity itself. The artistic and philosophical movement we call 'romanticism' was largely a reaction against it, and protest movements of various kinds have continued to arise in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. One reviewer called Peter Lomas "the last Romantic". Perhaps, indeed, he could be correctly described as a Romantic – but fortunately he was by no means the last one.

What does all this have to do with psychotherapy? It is precisely in the field known as 'mental health' that some of most insidious forms of instrumental

rationality can be found. In the first place, dominant approaches within psychiatry are overwhelmingly *positivistic* – that is, they apply a natural-scientific approach to human experience and behaviour, treating the individual not as a subject but an object and striving to develop technologies (neurobiological, behavioural or managerial) for 'optimising' behaviour, and experience.

Today's mental health system is founded on the hope that given time, the spectacular advances which scientists have brought about in our ability to manipulate natural phenomena will soon be matched in the human sphere. However, an essential feature of this utopia is that it will not be run by its inhabitants. Implementing the techniques that science has developed for managing emotions and relationships is a matter for experts, not for ordinary people. This positivist approach maintains a strict distinction between observer and observed, between professional and client. In this scheme of things, there is no place for the notion that therapy is concerned with the 'ordinary' and is based on a personal relationship – a dialogue – between two individuals respecting each other as equals.

Many people attempting to escape from the 'iron cage of modernity' and to rediscover values, personal relationships and their own lost humanity, end up in this mental health system and can truly be said to have jumped out of the frying pan into the fire. Of course, it is a caricature to portray all mental health workers as white-coated technologists whose only contact with people is via the electrodes they attach to their heads. Many such workers, indeed, have never seen an electrode in their lives and concern themselves day in, day out with the emotional needs of their clients – even, let it be said, with their need to be treated as subjects rather than objects.

Nevertheless, although their methods may not be entirely positivistic, they have to work within a bureaucratic system that is totally dominated by instrumental rationality. Their training will be standardised and vetted by licensing bodies, their activities regulated by compulsory protocols, and their performance constantly monitored to ensure they are achieving the goals that have been set for them. There is less and less place for 'the personal' in all this.

These developments are part of an intensified process of rationalisation which has overtaken Western organisations since around 1980, the beginning of the neo-liberal era ushered in by Reagan and Thatcher. Service costs were becoming too high and had to be reduced to maintain the profitability of corporations and cut the cost of public services. This was deemed especially necessary in mental health services, which had become the victim of their own success: the idea of 'mental health' had become increasingly acceptable to the public in the post-war era, and this had placed services under an intolerable financial strain. The same had occurred elsewhere in the health care system, and the introduction of 'managed care' into this system was supposed to relieve the strain.

In other sectors, too, the dominance of instrumental rationality has increased dramatically over the last thirty years. It may not be entirely coincidental that this is also the period of the 'computer revolution', in which the role of human beings was to a large extent taken over by information technology. We need not be sentimental about the disappearance of the army of clerks whose only task from dawn to dusk was to transfer figures by hand from one ledger to another. However, things have perhaps gone too far when we read that the average independent psychotherapist in the Netherlands has to spend thirty thousand euros on software in order to administer a practice and often has to devote one day in the week to grappling with it. Faced with this situation, many have in fact abandoned the profession.

It is hardly a consolation to learn that the same process has overcome countless other activities in both private and public sectors. An army of management consultants has sprung up to implement supposedly universal principles of rationalisation in education, welfare work, banking, retailing, the transport sector – in short, practically everywhere. As early as 1993, this process had acquired the label 'McDonaldization' (Ritzer 2008). Every aspect of human activity now has to be standardised, quantified, monitored and controlled: teachers, researchers and doctors have to make sure their 'output' reaches target levels, and 'quality control procedures' have to be implemented to ensure that they are doing a good job.

In resisting this tendency, the Outfit is of course not arguing for therapists' right to do a bad job. The argument about accreditation is a more fundamental one: it is about *the very idea* of defining criteria for 'good' therapy – in particular, the notion that there could ever be objective, scientific standards for what constitutes a good therapist, as well as precise, quantifiable procedures for turning out such people. The heart of the matter is that instrumental rationality seeks to achieve objectivity by the use of *impersonal* procedures – procedures which have been so completely formalised that no personal judgement is necessary to apply them. Peter's basic conviction, however, was that psychotherapy is intrinsically a *personal* matter. The response to the client must be a personal one or it is nothing, and this response can never be laid down in rules and protocols.

In today's world, such views are tantamount to heresy. We have become so accustomed to living in Weber's 'iron cage', newly refurbished by Microsoft, that objections to this system are increasingly seen by those who run it as perverse and irresponsible. How could one possibly defend *not* working in an 'evidence-based', scientifically controlled, properly regulated and managed way – particularly where large sums of public money are involved? Yet there is a steadily increasing chorus of protest from the people who actually provide and use services in organisations that have been 'McDonaldized'. In particular, there are ample indications that the treatment offered by a mental health system run in this way is not what people are looking for, and also not what they need. Nor is it what most therapists had in mind when they set off down the path of professional training.

It is worth saying something at this point about the affinities between Peter's work and the 'critical psychiatry' movement, of which R.D. Laing was perhaps the best known British exponent in the sixties and seventies. Peter was a contemporary and a colleague of Laing and shared many of his interests, though he maintained a careful distance from Laing's circle. He, too, sought his inspiration in existentialism, phenomenology and the hermeneutic tradition – in approaches based on dialogue and 'human sense', rather than the technical concepts of psychoanalysis or neurology. But whereas Laing seemed at a certain point to start enjoying his demonization by the professional mainstream and his subsequent career as an icon of the 'counter-culture', Peter was on a different track. It was not part of his ambition to be ostracised and marginalised by the psychiatric and psychoanalytic communities. He knew that many of them agreed with him, and was puzzled and pained – to the very end of his life – by the failure of these people to come out in support of his views.

Peter's critique of mainstream mental health services, moreover, was not limited to the targets of the 'critical psychiatry' or 'anti-psychiatry' movements. Of course he was fundamentally opposed to biomedical reductionism and to traditional Kraepelinian 'asylum psychiatry': but his main concern was with the 'soft' forms of treatment often put forward as the enlightened alternative to psychiatry, namely psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. His critique moved

with the times, aiming first at the self-serving hegemony of the professional organisations, and later at the mindless bureaucratic systems which came to absorb even these organisations.

There is, of course, much more to be said about Peter's relation to the mental health mainstream and the values that he defended so creatively and tenaciously. I hope that the writing he was busy with in the most recent (and most trying) period of his life will be made available to us soon, so that we can learn more about what he himself thought about these questions.

In conclusion, I would like to return to the theme with which I started this short essay. Those of us who had the privilege of knowing Peter mourn the loss of his warmth, generosity and courage, his gentle humour and his capacity to infect others with his own love of life. His works, however – not only his books, but the Outfit and all his other efforts to encourage a different way of thinking about psychotherapy – live on as an inspiration to us all.

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Peter Lomas

The Seven Rules of Psychotherapy

Having studied psychotherapy for fifty years I have concluded that there are seven rules for successful practice.

1 Say to yourself before each session 'I am not Winnicott, nor Jesus Christ. I am Joe Soap, so help me God, and I know bugger all.'

2 All you have got is this person in front of you. He is your only hope. Perhaps he can tell you something, so listen. He is probably more intelligent than you. At least he is not so stupid as to be sitting in your seat.

3 Silence is not golden. After a while say something, if only telling the patient the cricket score.

4 If you get into a rage, don't hit the patient. He might sue you. Just say 'I need a pee' and go out and meditate for a while. This rule is particularly important if the patient is a Turkish wrestler with homicidal tendencies.

5 The patient's money is precious, you mustn't be.

6 Do not worry if you find you are more screwed up than the patient. This is quite normal. It is called the Inequality of the Therapeutic Relationship.

7 Remember that you can never get it right.
These rules never fail. But if they do you could always try beach volleyball.

With thanks to Jon Lomas, who read out Peter's rules at the celebration service on January 25th.

Caroline Nielson

Poems

Cat Flap

And so she sits,
Stolid and insubstantial
In her silence,
Her fur-clad bag
Clamped tight
Upon her lap.

She waits,
Tight lipped,
Curled into her despair.

The silence creeps around,
Incessant,
Insistent in its itchy clamour.

Her listener feels the unwrapping
Tissue light,
Flapping against her own
Flimsy veneer

Unable to bear
Her mind cracks away,
Stutters into
Staccato grasping
For the cool reassurance
Of technique,
A crampon to hold onto
And still the dreadful slide
Downwards.

I mind the tale
And take my turn

To wait
And watch,
Too soon to speak,

And glimpse a cat
Tucked tight upon itself,
Coiled sorrow-cold
And new-born blind.

To sit,
And hope
The warmth of my benign attention
Will coax her to
Unfurl, unfold
And stretch to claim
More space.

To listen,
And half-hear
The stuttering rumble-hum
Of a disused motor
Beginning to purr
To itself

Long-term Lullaby

And so we rock,
She rocks, I rock,
Together
To and fro,
Between then and now,
Now and then,
Here and there

And sometimes
We get so caught up
In the dandling flow,
That we simply laugh out loud,
Filling with helium-high hope,
To glimpse a new home
A haven
On the horizon
Ahead

Leaving the gloom
Far enough below
And out of view
For a life-lasting moment.

Sleeping Beauty

"Maybe there's an underground
Fairy-tale thing,
A moment when
You just want
Someone
So much
That you think that they will come
And be there with you.

But it's unrealistic,
And I'm setting myself up,
Do I keep saying, 'One more month,'
Only one more month?'
I just need
To be able
To make a decision
And move on."

Her heart-worn mobile
Seems to nod,
Hand-warmed into agreement,
As the checkout girl takes her card
And asks, again,
"So, do you want any cash-back then,
Or not?"

Transmission Fault

From somewhere behind me
Her disembodied voice wafts
Into the range of my attention.

'Where do learning difficulties, disabilities
stop
And mental health start?
What's the difference?
I tried googling for meaning,
If you tap in 'difficulties' you get…'

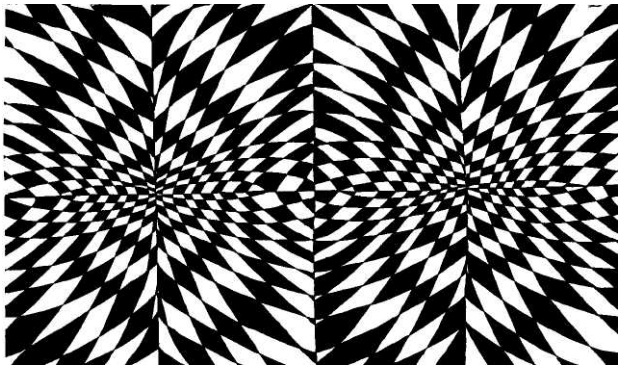
She fades
As if the radio dial is loose,
A faulty connection perhaps?
I sip my coffee
And back she loops again.

'…And so it matters how it happens,
How you get to that point.
It's like delusions…'

I seem to be having trouble following

'It must have been really difficult for her
Going in as supply…
You've really got to get
To know a person
First…'

She fragments yet further away,
And when I turn to locate her,
Craning my neck
To peer behind me,
I find I can't see for looking.



Positive Negatives

Excuse me,
Are you part of the university?
Do you know if it's shut over the bank holiday,
The library?
I don't want to have to come all that way,
And then find myself locked out.

'What are you doing here?
Oh, Psychotherapy!
I was kicked out of there;
I've had mental health problems.

'The first time it was a broken love affair,
A relationship,
He left me and it was said to me,
I was asked, "Why this?
It seems you need,
That what you want,
Is spiritual healing."

'And the next time I said,
"There's no point starting,
I'm leaving soon and
This is long-term." '

Across the closed stalls,
And still she's calling out to me.

'He said to me,
"The trouble is you don't want to change,"
And I said, "It's taken me 52 years
To be this, a Self,
Why would I want to change,
And risk losing that?" '

She washes her hands
And waves water at me
In soapy emphasis,
'Everything I've said,
It doesn't mean I think
It's not a good thing,
It's just not for me.'

I reach the door
And again she calls out behind me,
One last time.

'Anyway, good luck with all that,
Just because it's not for me,
Doesn't mean I think
It's not a good thing;
I'm just not suited.'

Rhymed with Reason

'It's just a kind of loving', he said
And she hoped that would be enough,
Whatever it meant.

But was it kind love, blind love,
Mind love?
How could she find love?
And so she carried on,
Wondering as they wined and dined,
Designed to bind,
Signed and combined,
Refined and
Sometimes maligned,
And finally
Resigned themselves in time
To what, she decided,
Could best be described as,
Loving of a certain kind

And which,
As she later told the children,
Was infinitely better than
No love at all.

Coffee-Shop Corral

Seventy and over, if a day,
She delves into her bag
And twirls the cowboy hat flirtatiously,
Finger-flicking the fringe
To beguile her unarmed friend,
'I'm wearing this for the party,
It's a Western theme.'

Two sips and one bite later,
'There's an awful feeling
Of falling,
Do you know?
I get it sometimes.
It's really scary and
You just shoot up.'

I contemplate the carnage
Of gum-slinging, gun-toting,
Pistol-packing grandmothers,
Decked out in costume
And giddy with the drop,
And keep my eyes averted for
Fear of cappuccinos at dawn,
And a choking deluge of chocolate-dusted
froth,
Heading my way
Like a buffalo-storm.

Watermarked

'We drowned completely,
Twice,
We really did.'
I craned my neck to look behind
At this dripping epitomy
Of life caught thrice.

Peered and squinted to see
The signs of such a trauma,
Bloated blue beneath
Limpet-clinging slime,
Pools on the floor
Around her flippered feet.

Hard to tell though,
What truly lay beneath,
As she sipped serenely at her tea,
Fin-free and elegant,
Scales twinkling and
Net stowed safely out of sight,
Below the Gucci-deck.

'Do come to dinner',
She enticed
Her drought-dry companion,
Nibbling a biscotti
With un-crumbed fingers,
'We're having fish.'

Pater and the Wolf

When the Oestre wolf comes calling,
And whistles my name through fearsome fangs,
I shall want to look my best,
Before opening up the door.

But this time I know to find
A bold hat of tall insouciance,
Just like the one that daddy made,
And different from all the others.

Far better to face the hungry in that,
Than a clichéd bonnet dripping
Fancy-full ribbons, fit for naught
But tiresome simpering and woe.

Margaret Farrell

A Look at Siblings

As is usual, I am turning to the dictionary to find a starting point for my thoughts on siblings, and there I find that the word 'sibling', or 'sib' comes from the Old English, originally used to mean simply kinship, or 'one who has a parent or ancestor in common with another' (Chambers). The OED suggests that the word refers to children related by one or both parents — thus including half-sibs. However, there is no mention at all of 'siblings' in the major psychoanalytic dictionary, *The Language of Psychoanalysis* (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1983). In Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations* there is no entry in the index for 'siblings' although there is over a column of entries for 'brothers' — but only a third of a column for 'sisters.' Given how important these members of the family are in human society, I wonder if there is something hidden, strangely unaddressed — a seemingly unknown territory that is repressed or even denied.

In order to think about siblings, perhaps we need first to explore our ideas of 'the family.' Our Western template or stereotype is of two parents of opposite sex with their own biological children. Nevertheless, within our culture there are in addition a good many variations including half-sibs, step-sibs and adopted children, and recently with the introduction of same-sex partnerships, two parents of the same sex. We also use the concept of the wider, 'extended family' to include grandparents, cousins, uncles, aunts and cousins — usually still biologically connected — except of course for the dreaded 'in-laws.'

Adam Phillips in his recent book *Side Effects* provocatively defines families as 'groups of people of more than one generation who have a passion for living together.' Although this definition omits the usually-accepted biological ties, he goes on to say that 'If the family, at its very best, inspires and is inspired by a passion for living together, this passion…involves frustration. Because the thing the family exposes... is each individual member's capacity to bear frustration. . . .Children are both the objects and the saboteurs of their parents' desire.' I would like to expand this interpretation by adding that within the one-generation sibling group, there is also a similar tension between the desire, which may be incestuous, to love each other, and the opposing wish to hate the others and to be the parents' only child.

In traditional psychoanalytic literature generally there is almost no mention of siblings. In dozens of therapy books whose indexes I have scoured, siblings hardly appear — and then usually only as in 'sibling rivalry' or 'guilt following the death of a sibling.' In my copy of a Concordance of Freud, siblings are hardly given a mention, even though he himself was well acquainted with siblings in his own early life, having had two older half-brothers, a younger brother, and five sisters. The half-brothers were much older than Sigmund, being the offspring of his father's previous marriage, so that John, Sigmund's nephew, was actually a year older than Sigmund — and they were inseparable friends, as well as childish 'enemies.' The infant/toddler

Sigmund experienced another crucially important event: when Sigmund was only about 15 months old, his mother, Amalie, gave birth to her second son, Julius. Julius died when Freud was almost two. Freud recalled or re-constructed his feelings of sibling rivalry when this child was born, but we would nowadays lay much greater stress on his probable guilt feelings about the death, as well as his experience of the grief and distress of his parents. About this complex set of family relationships, Peter Gay, in *Freud: A Life for Our Time,* says: 'Tangled domestic networks were fairly common in the nineteenth century ... but the riddles confronting Freud were intricate beyond the ordinary.'

Freud himself had six children in the space of nine years — three boys and three girls. He took an active interest in raising them, including master-minding a birthday party for Mathilde, with twenty little guests. There were many mountain holidays in his long vacations while the children were growing up; one noticeable thing, however, is that the boys were much more involved in forest hikes with their father than the girls — perhaps partly at least, reflecting the cultural mores of the time; the girls nevertheless participated in the frequent mushroom hunts. Martin Freud, in his endearing book *Sigmund Freud: Man and Father* stresses that the boys generally got on well together; he says less about the relationships amongst the girls. Clearly there was a rich family life, the domestic side organised by Freud's wife and her sister — but certainly Freud joined in, and was very fond of all his children. In his letters he constantly referred to their doings and his concerns about their health and progress, but in his work he seemed surprisingly uninterested in exploring sibling relationships. He himself continued to be close to his own original family in Vienna until 1938, especially his younger brother Alexander. And, after exile, at least four of the adult children continued their close family connections.
In contrast to her father, Anna Freud, the youngest of the six children, was, in her psychoanalytic work, specifically interested in child development. She, more than many psychoanalysts, did not see the relationship of a child to its siblings simply as part of a 3-person structure, centred on rivalry for the mother/parents or the resolution of the castration complex. She explored developmental issues of 'progressive' or 'regressive' tendencies in children, and subsequent differing reactions to the birth of a sibling. What she called the 'progressive' child could claim to be 'big' and 'important' compared to the baby, while the child with a need to regress would give up on his achievements, arid wish to become a baby again. In her work *Normality and Pathology in Childhood,* she lists four clear phases in a child's developmental growth under the heading 'From Egocentricity to Companionship': these are in sequence:

1) a selfish, narcissistically-oriented outlook in which other children either do not figure at all or only as disturbers of the mother-child relationship or rivals for the parents' love;
2) a perception of other children as lifeless objects or toys;
3) the use of other children as helpmates in tasks, but the duration of the partnership being determined by the task and secondary to it;
4) finally, the acknowledgement of other children as partners and objects in their own right, equipping the child for companionship, enmities and friendships of any type and duration.

Psychoanalysis has generally focused on 'sibling rivalry' – the obvious competition for the goodness / breast of the mother or the approval / companionship of the father. Anna Freud's observations and comments do suggest that relationships between siblings can be much more complex than simple rivalry. Nevertheless, I think it remains true that we are too much influenced by the rivalry theory, and may consequently bring it about in our attitude to our own children at the expense of observing or encouraging other more positive or complex aspects of relationships. I would like to draw a more recent work on the development of the self, especially as focused on by

Heinz Kohut. In his investigation into the development of the optimal self, Kohut emphasizes 'a person's experience of being whole and continuous, of being fully alive and vigorous, or of being balanced and organized.' (*How Does Analysis Cure*) He stresses the importance of laying down a psychological structure — and it is easy to see that this relates well to the points made earlier by Anna Freud. Relationships with siblings can provide much of the necessary experience — or battleground — where many of these conditions can be evolved and worked through. Kohut emphasises empathy and mirroring as aspects of the child's relation to parents—but they can also be a significant aspect of sibling relationships. However, even Kohut seems to regard these crucial elements in the development of the self as occurring exclusively in relationship to parents and in the abovementioned book refers to siblings only in terms of sibling rivalry.

In her book *Siblings*, Juliet Mitchell, a psychoanalyst with an anthropological point of view, has suggested a radically different approach to the analytical treatment of siblings. She develops the concept of *lateral relations* as important in their own right. She quotes Malinowski in the 1920's arguing that 'the permissions and prohibitions in relations between sisters and brothers may be more important than those between parents and children.' Kohut, again, spoke of normal needs to have an alter-ego, or 'twin'-- fantasies coming out of the need for a sense of self, to be confirmed by a 'Self-Object.' Both approaches suggest that there is a complex and libidinally-driven relationship between siblings quite apart from, or in addition to the rivalry of siblings for attention and the gratification of parental love.

Mitchell refers to Malinowski's studies of the Trobriand islanders where the primary triangular relationship would be brother, sister, and sister's son. This pattern is in contrast to our 'normal' assumption that the biological parental couple is the focus, even battleground, of libidinal desires. She questions our cultural emphasis on biological parenthood and points out that in such societies the mother's brother is the major authority figure rather than the biological father. In many societies studied by anthropologists there are complex sibling and same-age, often same-sex, important relationships and taboos.

Interestingly, even Winnicott, himself the youngest of three children, has little to say about sibling relationships other than in the context of sibling rivalry. His analysis of the Piggle concerns itself a great deal with Gabrielle's relationship to her sister Susan, twenty-one months younger. He reports the mother of the Piggle writing to him toward the end of therapy when the Piggle was four, saying 'My anxieties were very intense at the time of Susan's birth — I forgot whether I told you that I have a brother, whom I greatly resented, who was born when I was almost exactly the same age as Gabrielle was when Susan was born.' This quote emphasises Winnicott's concern with sibling rivalry as a dynamic that is passed on from parents to the children.

Who are siblings? Are they the children of the same mother and father? There is the old saying: 'It's a wise child who knows its own father.' Evidence is coming to light, especially with DNA testing, that many more children than previously thought do not have the assumed biological father. What about half-siblings? Step-siblings? Adopted siblings? And as in Freud's case, for example, how about nephews and nieces who grow up as siblings? And what about children who are brought up by grandparents, so that sometimes the mother is ascribed sibling status. Even for only children there are many sibling issues:

1) there may have been a dead sibling or miscarriage, possibly occasioning fantasies of destruction or omnipotence;
2) there may be a wish for a sibling, to be the fantasised ideal 'twin' or playmate;
3) there may be an imaginary friend or sibling;
4) there will be observations of other families or school experiences.

I have chosen several examples from literature and biography to illustrate both our widespread, compelling interest in

sibling relationships, and also the great variety of such relationships in their many manifestations. I have included both large families (the Mitfords, Jane Austen's family and the family of Maura Murphy), intense rivalrous relationships and their resolutions (Margaret Atwood's semi-fictional account, and Evelyn Waugh's relationship with his brother), and one example of a famous only child (Christopher Robin Milne). In fiction and biography we can work through our own sibling fantasies — and recognise how large a part they play in these works - even possibly a larger role than that given to relationships with parents, especially as siblings are contemporaneous with ourselves, share our lives (in reality or fantasy), while parents grow old and disappear.

Here is a passage from Margaret Atwood's semi-autobiographical book, *Moral Disorder*, which deals with the older of two siblings who is required to look after the younger:

> The summer I was eleven I spent a lot of time knitting.. .a set of baby garments you were supposed to dress the newborn baby in so it would be warm when it was brought home from the hospital.. .Babies dressed in layettes, ... were supposed to resemble confectionary — clean and sweet, delicious little cake like bundles decorated with pastel icing. . . .1 had a vision of how the entire set would look when finished — pristine, gleaming, admirable, a tribute to my own goodwill and kindness. I hadn't yet realized it might also be a substitute for them.
>
> I had been told about the expectant state of my mother in May.. .it had made me very anxious, partly because I'd also been told that until my new baby brother or sister had arrived safely, my mother would be in a dangerous condition.. .The danger that loomed was so vague, and so large — how could I even prepare for it?... if only I could complete the full set of baby garments, the baby that was supposed to fit inside them would be conjured into the world, and thus out of my mother; [then] it could be dealt with.

[The baby was born just before M was twelve].

> 'The baby was cute, though in no time flat she outgrew my layette. But she didn't sleep. . .From having been too fat, my mother now became too thin. She was gaunt from lack of sleep, her hair dull... I did my home work lying on my back with my feet up on the baby's crib, jiggling it and jiggling it so that my mother could get some rest.'

Eventually, one evening, the baby started to cry, and her mother asked Margaret: " 'Could you go and put her to sleep?'... as she had done so often before. "Why should I, I said, "She's not my baby. I didn't have her. You did." Her mother then slapped her. Nevertheless, in later life the two sisters became close friends.

Another sibling pair was Evelyn Waugh and Alec, his older brother by five years. In their case there were extreme grounds for sibling rivalry; Alec received all their father's attention and praise, to a pathological degree; for example, the father wrote to him every single day while he was at father's old boarding school. Evelyn's grandson, Alexander Waugh writes (in *Fathers and Sons,)* 'Alec and Arthur [father] were a two-man gang from which Evelyn was excluded. . . for a while [Alec] even contemptuously referred to him as 'It." Originally, Evelyn hated Alec, who got all the best presents, even the bicycle that Evelyn had begged for. But when Alec returned from the (1918) war, he seemed to have changed into a glorious figure, and became Evelyn's mentor, including being his guide in sexual matters. They overcame their earlier rivalry by choosing to cast themselves in a kind of 'uncle-nephew' relationship which lasted until Evelyn's death. Thus it seems that in spite of intense rivalry for the father's attention and love — and relatively little contribution from the mother — the two boys worked out their own separate and ultimately rewarding relationship.

Very large families afford the siblings a great range of choice as to whom to 'pair' up with, whom to admire, whom to fall out with, how to exist in a peer group; siblingship offers a wide range of defences. Freud himself chose to be

a mentor and close friend of his brother Alexander throughout his life. This may illustrate a gender divide, since Alexander was 10 years younger than Sigmund; the intervening 5 sisters were not nearly as close to Freud.

Two other very large families that spring to mind are Jane Austen's family (8 children in 12 years), and the Mitfords (7 children in 16 years).

Jane Austen was the seventh child in her family, with 5 older brothers, one older sister and one younger brother. The second child in the family, George, was handicapped in some way, and sent off to live with another family; the third son, Edward, was also parcelled off, to distant cousins, the Knights, who even took him with them on their honeymoon, and subsequently adopted him. Even in their infancy the Austen children were farmed out to nurses in the village — probably wet-nurses; in those days there seems to have been much more readiness to put children with families other than their birth families. For the Austens this cannot entirely have been caused by lack of room, since they also ran a small school for boys in their house. Thus Jane not only had a large number of siblings, but also other, older children living with the family. Although her biographer, Claire Tomalin, suggests that she enjoyed playing and rough-housing with the boys, her closest sibling, as is well-known, was her sister Cassandra, who was three years older. When Jane was born her father wrote that Jane would be a 'present plaything for her sister Cassy and a future companion.' This corresponds strikingly with two of Anna Freud's categories. At one point in adult life Cassandra wrote that Jane was 'the sun of my life, the gilder of every pleasure.' Jane's brothers were very supportive of her literary efforts, but it was Cassy that she remained close to all her life.

Members of one of the most extraordinary large families of the 20th century, the Mitfords, wrote autobiographies and also have been the subjects of several biographies. Jessica's book, *Hons and Rebels,* a thinly-disguised account of their family life, feeds into our fantasies of a large family. In 16 years there were 7 children — 6 girls and one boy; there were private languages amongst the siblings, family jokes and escapades, and endless nicknames. Mary Lovell, their biographer, suggests 'how quickly or how completely the mirth of the sisters' childhood disintegrated into conflict, unexpected private passions, and tragedies' as they became adults. Rather like the Austens, the Mitford girls were joined by four other children who were taught with them during the (first) war, although Tom was sent to boarding school. The girls seemed to enjoy teasing and even bullying their only brother, but were later deeply shocked and bereaved when he died in Burma in 1945. Upper class families such as the Mitfords also included nannies and governesses as parental figures, and in the Mitfords' case an apparently rather cold, distant, preoccupied mother,. This may have encouraged the children to form a kingdom of their own.

Maura Murphy, coming from a very different social background, in her book *Don't Wake Me at Doyles,* describes her life as one of 7 children in a poor Irish family, with very busy and sociable parents. Similarly to the Mitfords there were nicknames and alliances. However, their mother suffered a depressive breakdown after the death of one of the younger children and the birth of the youngest, which meant that Maura and her sister Carmel, 14 months older, had to take over the housekeeping and child-care. Maura's lifetime closeness to Carmel seems similar to Jane Austen's relationship with Cassandra. The intimacies and enmities of the children's 'kingdom' continued to operate throughout adult life, and were repeated in Maura' s own family of 9 children.

Other large families often seem to share similar characteristics: admiration of the oldest ones, busy, preoccupied, dead or dysfunctional parents, gender divisions, close alliances and fluctuating disagreements and enmities. Children's

literature such as Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons,* Enid Blyton's *Famous Five* series, E. Nesbit's tales, L. M. Alcott's *Little Women,* and many others, have appealed to our fantasies of kinship, cooperation and closeness, whilst other books, most notably in our day the *Harry Potter* books, show the only child having to make his way in a dangerous world.

Christopher Robin Milne, as portrayed in the stories and poems written by his father, surely represents our fantasy of the enchanted life of the only child whose stuffed-toy 'siblings' represent his benign projections, guarding him from loneliness. However, he himself as an adult has written about his struggles to remove himself from his father's powerful idealisations, and how even as a child his life was not always as idyllic and charming as the 'Pooh' books made out. Christopher's main 'parent' figure until he was ten was in fact his nanny, while his father wove his own narcissistic preoccupations around his child. After Nanny was finally let go, Christopher had a close relationship with his father for another 10 years, but his relationship with his mother never appeared to be very close, and in later years he seems hardly to have seen her at all. He himself became the father of an only child, Clare, who was severely affected by cerebral palsy. He was extremely devoted to her, perhaps in a way treating her like the treasured younger sibling he never had. He wrote poignantly in his autobiography that

> There was one great difference between my father and myself when we were children. He had an elder brother; I had not. So he was never alone in the dark ... he had only to reach out a hand and there would be [his brother] in the next bed. I continued to have night fears for a long time.

I have quoted these literary and biographical examples to give a flavour of various types of sibling relationships, with some regard to the children's position in the family. I have tried to emphasise how important these relationships are in the family context, bearing in mind social setting, numbers of relatives, and the personal histories and conscious and unconscious feelings of the parents. There is much more to explore in terms of relative positions in birth order, absences, bereavements, and incest. I have also wished to indicate that in our culture there are powerful fantasies about the meaning and value of sibling relationships — and that while the model of sibling rivalry is generally, even overly, acknowledged, there is also a very strong need to see sibling relationships as companionable, lasting and loving. I have deliberately emphasised the mainly positive elements of sibling relationships because of my belief that psychoanalysis and its child-rearing derivatives have over-emphasised sibling rivalry and have not (with the exception of Juliet Mitchell's work) examined sufficiently the extreme importance of sibling relationships in the development of an individual's life narrative and the growth of the Self.

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Sian Morgan

Françoise Dolto: her life and work

The subject matter of this article is covered in depth by Sian Morgan in her chapter Françoise Dolto: a biography in the book *Theory and Practice in Child Psychoanalysis: an introduction to the work of Françoise Dolto,* edited by Guy Hall, Françoise Hivernel and Sian Morgan. It was published by Karnac Books in 2009 and is available from their web site: www.karnacbooks.com

I first heard of Françoise Dolto from a Parisian analyst, Patrick Guyomard, who came to Cambridge to teach Lacan in the late 1980's; Patrick had worked with both Maud Mannoni and Françoise Dolto. I later wrote a paper about her life and her most seminal ideas 15 years ago while I was studying Lacan. Her writing provided some relief from Lacan's mystifying text, illuminating his more obscure ideas.

I have belonged to a French psychoanalytic reading group for the last three or four years and it was while reading a book by Françoise Dolto that three of us decided to compile a book of papers about her life and work because very little of her work has been translated into English.

It was her work with babies which first caught my attention. I was interested in the ways her ideas both resembled and differed from those of Winnicott. She was Winnicott's contemporary and also a paediatrician and psychoanalyst. Dolto is more of a Freudian than Winnicott and focuses more on the importance of language. She believed that human beings are the product of language from their earliest stage of their lives, from conception and also that infants understand much more than is commonly believed. She thought that infants are in receipt of their family history which is transmitted unconsciously from generation to generation. As a consequence of this, she believed that the infant's experience needs to be made sense of and communicated to them so that they are not left alone with what might have traumatised them in the womb, during the process of birth or after birth. As a paediatrician, she is known for having had remarkable success in calming troubled infants, by speaking to them, believing that although the baby's self is immature, his unconscious is equal to that of the adult.

Dolto is a drive theorist and talks about the ways in which each of us can be caught between drives towards a non-life, in the repetitive meeting of need, and on the other hand, the drive towards life and desire. For Dolto the concept of desire has overtones of faith in God: as a devout Christian, she believed that our longing for completion should be directed towards God. Need is distinguished by its repetitive nature while desire brings something new. Desire arises out of the acceptance of separation and loss in both parents and child, an acceptance of what she calls benign castration. It is through language that it becomes possible to transform the desire of the body to body relationship between mother and baby into a cultural expression.

Her other seminal idea was that of the unconscious image of the body. This is an unconscious representation of the primitive experience and emotional history of the infant. Drawings and clay modelling played a major role in Dolto's work with children and it was through observation of these that she arrived at the idea of the unconscious image of the body.

Françoise Marette Dolto was born in Paris in November 1908, into an affluent bourgeois family, the fourth of the seven children of Henri Marette and Suzanne Demmler. Her family was religious, strict, and protective. Her mother, though loving, was controlling and demanding, while her father was more liberal, encouraging her inventiveness and desire for knowledge. From childhood, she seems to have been an exceptionally independent spirit with an acute intelligence which her mother found deeply threatening. She was educated in a cours within the kind of seclusion typical for girls of the time, pursuing her studies on her own, only having contact with other children at playtime. She was well known for being funny, jolly, noisy, and full of vitality.

She was even as a small girl a considerable force, causing discomfort with her penetrating gaze and intuitive capacity. Fiercely religious from a young age, she soon developed an enquiring and rebellious theological mind, arguing with her priest before her first communion. There was always an other-worldly quality to the young Françoise which led her into an awareness of mysticism, always sensing the protection of a guardian angel. She had the sensibility of an artist and became a skilled painter, potter, and sculptor. However, her imagination also encompassed the sciences, and from an early age, encouraged by her father, she became interested in the development of communication systems. As a child, she was an avid reader of technical journals, from which she taught herself Morse code and how to build a radio receiver. This served as a metaphor for her of how humans can communicate unconsciously, without obvious material means. By means of her radio receiver, she could receive the exact time from the Eiffel Tower. The Tower represented for her the phallic power of France and, along with her radio, her father's phallic strength with which she was identified.

Her relationship with her mother was often troubled. Her mother seems to have found her intelligent and irrepressible daughter, with her strange ideas and defiance of what was conventional for girls, incomprehensible. Françoise loved her mother but despaired of the monstrosity of her expectations and at her misogyny, bred of a sense of inferiority. Her mother seems to have suffered from extreme self-loathing, bred of a sense of guilt, which generated aggression towards herself and towards her children.

Her mother was preoccupied by Françoise's older siblings and seems not to have had very much time for her when she was young. Françoise was cared for by an Irish nurse, in the first months of her life. But this relationship was severed abruptly when the young nurse was dismissed, leaving Françoise deprived of the life she had known; and she succumbed to pneumonia.

Françoise Marette resolved as a young girl that she would try to become a médecin d'éducation, a term of her invention that described a doctor who would understand the emotions and the relationships between human beings which underpinned what is expressed in illness. She already sensed that she had been born too early for her ideas to be easily accepted.

Françoise became interested in madness early in her life. As a small child she challenged the limits of what could be thought, and was often the object of her mother's neurosis. Following the family's move to a new apartment overlooking the clinic for the insane, she became an observer of its wealthy inmates. She was an acutely perceptive child who enjoyed the foibles, contradictions, and eccentricities of the adults who surrounded her.

The First World War engendered a social madness. Her maternal uncle, Pierre was killed in action in 1916, a death that affected the whole family, particularly Françoise, who was his god-daughter. Françoise adored him. After his death Françoise considered herself a war widow. The whole of France had fallen into mourning following the First World War. The Marette family's grief was intensified by the death of Francoise's eldest sister Jacqueline in 1920, a crisis which had precipitated their mother Suzanne into a period of madness that inevitably burdened her younger daughter with a sense of guilt. It was the time of Françoise's first communion, when she was twelve and her sister was eighteen. When Jacqueline became seriously ill her mother began to use her daughter, Françoise, as a kind of psychoanalyst. Jacqueline had been her mother's favourite, being blonde with blue eyes. On the other hand, Françoise was dark like her mother, which led Francoise to believe that, in her mother's fantasy, she should have been the one to have died. While Jacqueline was dying, her mother demanded that Françoise should pray for her, because it was the eve of her first communion and only a miracle that might occur on the day of a child's first communion might save Jacqueline's life. So, Françoise was charged with praying to save her sister: of course, Françoise failed.

However, she was to spend her life repeating with considerable success what she had failed to do in relation to her sister, who died young, responding to the appeal of thousands of desperate parents with the healing words of a psychoanalyst. In the years that followed her sister's death, it is as if Françoise was stricken by a form of survivor guilt, which was in intense conflict with her passionate desire for life. Her letters to her parents at the time are long and affectionate. Many betray a sense of abjection. Her letters to her mother demonstrate that she had, as an adolescent, taken up the role of healer. The letters display a reparative need for not having been able to rescue Jacqueline, even for not being Jacqueline, for not being the daughter her mother yearned for. After the birth of Jacques Marette in 1922, the baby who, by his name, indicates the desire for a substitute for Jacqueline, Françoise, aged thirteen, writes to her mother:

> It grieves me that you feel that you won't later on gain as much support and consolation from having had boys. I understand that it isn't the same only having one big girl, compared with what it might have been to have two grown daughters, but I assure you that I will be a true daughter to you. I will try as hard as I can to replace Jacqueline. I will help raise my little brother so that he will be affectionate and will substitute in part for the little girl you might have had. And I will get married and stay close to you . . . I see now how much you cruelly suffered two years ago. I am sorry that I did not understand well enough at the time. I must have seemed thoughtless and ungrateful to you, when you saw me being full of life when you were so sad . . . I hope that wherever Jacqueline is that she will forgive me, that she will aid and protect me, because I didn't understand the bad things I was doing. [Dolto, 2003, p. 131]

Françoise had been a brilliant student and was ready to sit her Baccalauréat at the age of fifteen. She found herself under pressure because her mother's intention was that she should complete her studies by the age of sixteen; in order to forestall her daughter's bid for independence, her mother intervened and, without consultation, instructed her teachers not to enter her for the exam. Françoise, on discovering this, became enraged with her parents, one of the few times in her life she suffered what she described as a white rage, a rage which was incomprehensible to her mother but which her father understood only too well. He subsequently made it possible for her to sit the exam. Neither her mother nor her two older brothers, nor various friends of the family, could understand her, for, as far as they were concerned, a girl with qualifications was branded for life as a black sheep. Françoise passed her Baccalauréat with a

commendation, but her mother continued to oppose her progress. She was willing for her to train as a nurse, but did not want her to enter a lycée, where she might meet people of a lower class. Françoise was tolerant of her mother's possessiveness. She understood that her mother's demands and control were a consequence of her grief; her grief about Jacqueline but also about her own frustrated ambitions and fixated development. Her mother had wanted to be a suffragette and to have studied medicine, but had been overcome by neurosis and inhibited by the limitations of the age in which she grew up. Françoise had to fight her prejudices ferociously but with compassion, in the knowledge that her mother was terrified of loss and abandonment and was blind to her giftedness: "I have only one daughter, I do not want to have to sacrifice her to her ridiculous studies" (Chérer, 2008, p. 130).

In spite of her mother's protestations and manipulations, Françoise registered for her second Baccalauréat, at the Lycée Molière, in philosophy. When it came to her examination, the examiner asked her, somewhat sarcastically, to tell him what she knew about psychoanalysis. He was not expecting the elaborate and sophisticated response that ensued from a sixteen-year-old, but she impressed him to such an extent that she was once more passed with a commendation. Succumbing to her mother's wishes, from the age of sixteen to twenty-one she did not pursue her studies. She was held and protected within the family, typically for a young woman of her age she played the piano, painted, and read. The society within which she found herself did not esteem clever women; their role was to be dutiful daughters, then dutiful wives if they were fortunate and obedient. She was biding her time until the moment was right to enter medical school, for which she prepared herself by training as a nurse, acceptable to her mother as sufficiently feminine. She entered the nursing school of the Croix-Rouge in November 1929. Interestingly, this was the year that followed her visit to the battlefield where her uncle had been killed, as if she had now been able to let go of her grief, and her self-imposed status as war widow. In June 1930, she obtained her nursing diploma.

In *Autoportrait d'une psychanalyste*, Françoise Dolto describes the summer of 1931, when Suzanne Marette took Françoise to visit the family of old friends of Jacqueline, in Provence. She was asked to stay while her mother returned to Paris. Following her return, her mother wrote to her every day betraying an obsessive jealousy: "Why did you accept their invitation? It is because you do not love me. You prefer anyone to your mother" (Dolto, 1989, p. 94). She enjoyed her stay, in the company of two young women and their brother, sharing a delight in poetry, music, and nature. She interpreted the Greek myths to him from a psychoanalytic perspective, speculating on the nature of Medea in the human psyche. Françoise felt a platonic love for him. However, the young man fell in love with Françoise, but she could not reciprocate in kind. It soon became known to both mothers. Suzanne Marette insisted that the relationship could continue only if they became engaged. Françoise agreed in order to continue seeing him, but refused her mother's demand that they kiss in front of her and stated that she would only get married when she finished her medical training. Her mother was completely uncomprehending, ending by calling her daughter a monster. In this way, Françoise's mother placed her daughter in a bind. If you leave me, you do not love me; if you do not leave me and love him, you do not love me. In addition, it soon became apparent that the young man, D, did not want his wife to pursue her studies. Françoise soon told him, in no uncertain terms, that for her the pursuit of a medical career was far more important than marrying him. Her mother persisted in forbidding her to study medicine. As a consequence, Françoise, with characteristic bravura, insisted that she would register at the Sorbonne, but to study Italian. In an uncharacteristic volte-face, her mother suddenly gave her permission, in part because Françoise's younger brother Philippe intended to register at the faculty

of medicine. In November 1931, Françoise began her medical studies, accompanied by her brother Philippe, who was to act as her chaperone.

Françoise was also becoming increasingly aware of how destructive had been the effect of her mother's grief and her ferocious jealousy, an awareness that was soon to be magnified by her encounter with psychoanalysis. It was Marc Schlumberger, a fellow student who had been in analysis with Nunberg in Vienna and later Laforgue in Paris, and who had spent some time at Summerhill, who introduced her to the experience of the practice of psychoanalysis. Hitherto, it had been only a philosophical system of ideas for Françoise. In the first place, she looked to psychoanalysis for help for her brother, Philippe. Françoise was the more brilliant student, but sensed that her brother was in some way inhibited. Schlumberger suggested that Philippe consult with Laforgue. Within a fortnight of analysis with Laforgue, Philippe was working well, and both Françoise and Philippe passed their end of year exams. Meanwhile, Suzanne Marette was once more disgruntled that her daughter was happy and flourishing in her pursuit of a medical career. Françoise had not ceased to defend herself against her fiancé's disapproval, and, at the beginning of the second year of her studies, she became weary and overwhelmed with guilt and shame, no longer able to sleep or work effectively. So it was arranged that Françoise should become a patient of Laforgue's and that her father would pay. Her father's support had been invaluable to Françoise, and his paying for her analysis would enable her to become free of the yoke of her family and to develop her extraordinary ideas and psychoanalytic practice.

However, it is clear that a letter dated 15th May 1933 betrays her father's disquiet as to how she is changing:

> Since you began your medical studies, you appear to have changed and your attitude can cut me to the quick. Your attitude towards your mother and me reveals a Vava [pet name] who is very different from the person we knew as being straight forward, modest, affectionate and so tender. You seem to regard us as old spoilsports, and you are hardly able to be polite, in fact you seem to regard us with impatience. Alas, you are the only daughter left to us and you should be, in spite of your studies, a fond companion for your mother. It was a beautiful dream amongst many others that your mother has had stolen from her. . . My poor child I see terribly clearly but you are elusive, being gratified by these new ideas, and the blandishments offered you by sadistic dilettantes who are squandering your attention . . . You are succumbing to the most terrible pride and I hope that you will see that it is only in your parents that you can trust . . . Intelligence is not everything. It comes to nothing either serious or lasting without a considered moral framework. (Dolto, 2003, p.354)

Françoise took several months before directly answering her father's complaints. When she did, in a letter written in July 1933, she is clearly weary and contrite: "My greatest desire is to get to the end of this tiresome treatment as this would be the best way to thank you, by becoming a proper woman" (ibid., p. 382).

Françoise's thrice weekly analysis with Laforgue lasted three years, unusually long for the time. He forbade her from reading psychoanalytic theory, so that she might understand the experience of analysis 'from the heart'. She was impatient to finish her analysis and, at times did not appear to have relished the experience. "The atmosphere is heavy, when every word and gesture is interpreted" (ibid.,p. 535). She came to believe that her analysis would not be finished until she had ceased to narcissistically identify with her patients. Her guilt towards a sibling was repeated as a consequence of her analysis with Laforgue, and in this respect she is critical of him, for having taken her as a patient when Philippe, her brother, was also his patient. She felt that Philippe had once more been displaced by his elder sister, even attributing the severity of his

tubercular illness to her 'invasion' of his analytic space (Dolto, 1989, p. 120). Her analysis lasted from 1934 until 1937, the focus of it being her sense of entrapment by her mother and her consequent moral dilemma about her relation to her family. In *Autoportrait d'une psychoanalyste*, she expresses her debt to Laforgue and explains the helpful way in which he interpreted her relationship with her mother (ibid., p. 243). She describes herself as having begun her analysis in despair, grief, and overburdened with guilt towards her fiancé and towards her mother. Laforgue never blamed her mother, but always spoke to Françoise of her own sense of guilt.. Laforgue challenged Françoise's defensive avoidance and submissiveness, saying that nothing was worse for an obsessional neurotic, like her mother, than for others to collude with their obsessional ideas. He suggested that Françoise forbid her to speak to her in the way in which she had become accustomed.

In reaction to her daughter's newfound sense of authority, her mother backed down. Reflecting on her mother's capitulation, Françoise realized that her mother needed someone stronger than herself to curtail her passionate excesses because, although she was very intelligent, she sometimes behaved like a child and, like a child, she needed firm boundaries. This way of thinking and communicating was to help Françoise in her development as an analyst. In a letter written to her father in 1938, she expresses her full fury towards her mother and her grief at what she had suffered: "I have lost ten years of my life, without having had a true youth. I have had to wait to be thirty to become a real woman" (Dolto, 2003, pp. 528–9).

She now visited home less often. A rift opened up between her and her brother, Pierre, whom she claimed spoke on behalf of her mother's insinuations; he had made what seemed to be an anti-Semitic attack on psychoanalysis. Françoise attempted to explain her mother's neurosis to her father. She described the force of her mother, of her demand that Françoise be dutiful, of how she felt charged with so much blame. She told him that she believed Jacques was born to be a substitute for Jacqueline, and how such a strategy was destined for failure; that it was her attitude and containment that prevented her mother from collapsing into self-destruction after Jacqueline's death. She spoke of how she had been prepared to sacrifice her desire for medicine because she perceived it was her mother's wish, but also of her wish to be equal to her brothers and to have a man's profession. What is remarkable about the letter is its honesty and the hope which is contained within such an angry communication that there would be sufficient love between the members of the family to survive her attack. She evoked a deep sense of sadness at her own loss. Françoise Marette emerged from her analysis as a forthright and courageous young woman, who could be seen as a young Athene preparing to fight on behalf of the abandoned and disturbed children of France.

Life as a doctor and psychoanalyst

Responding to Laforgue's encouragement, Françoise began her training as a psychoanalyst in the Société Psychoanalytique de Paris, attending seminars given by Spitz, Loewenstein, Nacht, and Hartmann: at the time there was no child analytic training. Meanwhile, during her medical training, she had decided to specialise in paediatrics. After completing a psychiatric placement, she remarked, "It is too late to make a difference with adults who are so impaired; the work has to be done with children to prevent later disturbance" (Dolto, 1986, p. 60).

During her studies, she became an extern for Professor Heuyer, a child neuro-psychiatrist at the Hôpital Vaugirard, the only such department in France. She was horrified by what she witnessed: children in a state of semi-incarceration who were treated with a complete lack of empathy. No one seemed interested in understanding these children, no one, that is, apart from a psychoanalyst, Sophie Morgernstern, whom Heuyer had employed, in spite of his ambivalence towards psychoanalysis.

Sophie Morgernstern listened to her young patients, making links between their symptoms and family history, confirming Françoise Marette's intuition that certain physical symptoms were psychosomatic, caused by unconscious tensions within the family. In 1937, she became an extern at l'Hôpital des Enfants Malades, where disturbed children were sent for assessment. Here, Françoise began to conduct psychotherapeutic sessions using drawing and modelling to help the children put into words what was troubling them. At this stage in her career she had no intention of becoming a child analyst: her desire was to be a paediatrician.

She qualified as an analyst in 1938. She completed her medical training in 1939, with the submission of her thesis, *Psychanalyse et pédiatrie* (Dolto, 1939). Her intention in researching her thesis was not to promote psychoanalysis as such, but was to find an application for psychoanalysis within paediatrics. She submitted her thesis at 1.00 p.m. on 11th July 1939 and, unconventionally, an hour later she went immediately to register as a doctor. She was aware that war was imminent; the Second World War was declared on the 3rd September 1939. Had she registered any later, she would not have been able to practice until after the war was over. She stayed in Paris during the war, at first substituting at l' Hôpital des Enfants Malades for doctors who had been called up. Simultaneously, she began consultations as a psychoanalyst. Many Jewish analysts were obliged to flee, leaving their patients. In *Autoportrait d'une psychanalyste* (1989, p. 134) she described the terror in Paris when war was declared: ". . . the siren wailed, scenes of madness broke out and women screamed". The hospital she was visiting flooded with hundreds of raving people who had to be sedated. It was in this atmosphere that her career as a psychoanalyst and paediatrician began.

She was passionate about her consultations with children, many of whom had been sent to her because others had failed to help them. Her practice was regarded as eccentric, but her method worked with little bed-wetters, anorexics, children with nightmares, obsessions, tics, stammers, vomiting, tummy aches, and other unexplained sickness. In addition, now that war had been declared, she received the orphans of war, those who had lost their parents to camps, their fathers to the army, and those who were frightened by occupation. When Paris was invaded, her supervisor, Sophie Morgernstern, killed herself. Françoise Marette was forced to become independent, developing a way of working that was revolutionary, but there were many already who thought she was mad, calling her *la folle*.

In 1940, she began working in the department of neuro-psychiatry at l'Hôpital Trousseau, in Paris, establishing the first psychoanalytic consultancy in a neuro-psychiatric department of a children's hospital in France. She worked there until 1979. She was never officially employed by the hospital, but held the position without ever being an official member of staff and or being paid. It was here that she carried out her research and did her most creative work. In 1942, she married Boris Dolto; the marriage produced three children, Jean Chrisostome (1942–2008), Gregoire(1944), and Catherine (1946). Boris Dolto was a Ukrainian doctor, whom she had met during a discussion group on the subject of the "waking dream". He had emigrated from Russia, after the revolution. He qualified in orthopaedics and eventually founded the first French school of physiotherapy. During the war he was interviewed by the Nazis and made to strip naked to see if he had been circumcised. He was not, so was declared not to be Jewish, but the humiliation of this act lived with him all his life. Both Françoise and Boris, as well as two of Françoise Dolto's brothers, Pierre and Jacques, supported the Resistance, providing refuge and money.

Francoise Dolto found solace within the Russian Orthodox faith of her husband. In contrast to Catholicism, which designates the authority of man over woman, the Orthodox liturgy establishes the equality

of man and woman as subjects before God and the law. She did not support a church that institutionalized sadomasochism; rather, what she upheld in Christianity was its radical subversion of power. Her spiritual nature led to explorations of different faiths, including Hinduism.

After the war she was involved in many projects, in addition to her hospital work. In 1946, she worked at the Lycée Claude Bernard, helping to set up a psycho-pedagogical institution to research and provide help for students with learning difficulties. The research later informed the reform of the education system in France, introducing psychoanalytic ideas into education.

The Société Parisienne de Psychanalyse (SPP) was in disarray during the war years and did not reconvene until September 1946. Françoise Dolto was the object of prejudice and criticism within her own society; she was particularly undermined by Lebovici. In *Auto-portrait d'une psychanalyste* (1989, p. 138) she attributes Lebovici's attitude to fear based on his rivalry with her for power within the medical establishment. She asserts that she was not ambitious for titles; indeed, she considered such desire for advancement as being incompatible with being a psychoanalyst.

Dolto's father died in 1947. She left the Lycée Claude Bernard in 1949 to join Jenny Roudinesco at a clinic in the Boulevard Ney. Dolto was beginning to establish herself as an influential communicator, participating in radio broadcasts and publishing articles in the journal *Psyche*. In the same year, she gave a paper at the first International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA) Congress since the war, the XVIth International Psychoanalytic Congress at Zurich, giving a seminal paper entitled, "The Poupée Fleur, used in psychoanalytic treatment". The Poupée Fleur was an invention of Françoise Dolto's, for use in the treatment of a little schizophrenic girl. She had noticed how frequently flowers were depicted in the drawings of children with narcissistic disturbances and among anorexics. She made a doll that had a flower face but no features, and no hands or feet. The Poupée Fleur served as a mirror to stimulate a primitive, aggressive oral transference and to unblock communication. Her creativity with children began to excite the interest of an international audience.

Lacan, who was now on the training committee of the SPP, responded to Françoise Dolto's paper:

> Doctor Lacan feels strongly that the Poupée Fleur of Madame Dolto has a bearing on his researches into the Mirror Stage, the narcissistic body image and the disintegrated body. He thinks it is important that the doll has no mouth, would like to stress that it is a sexual symbol and that it masks the human face. He would like to finish by saying that one day he would like to make a theoretical contribution in response to Madame Dolto's offering. (Dolto & Nasio, 1987, 2002, p. 57)

Françoise Dolto responded by saying that the Poupée Fleur did indeed connect to the mirror stage, but only on condition that the mirror stage could be understood not only as reflecting what is visible, but also included what is heard, felt, and intended. The mirror stage, for Lacan, brought with it a sense of narcissistic jubilation, whereas for Françoise Dolto, the mirror stage brought with it the experience of castration and a sense of sadness, of not being the image reflected by the mirror. The mirror, for Françoise Dolto, was a mirror of all the senses, which formed a basis for what was to become her major theoretical contribution, *L'Image inconsciente du corps*, "a mirror of the being of the subject in the other" (ibid., p. 59).

Meanwhile, in Paris, a schism was opening up in the SPP. The main source of dissension within the organization hinged on Lacan's unorthodox psychoanalytic practice: specifically, his shortened sessions. Françoise Dolto was also the object of criticism, partly because she allied herself with Lacan, but also

because, in her own right, she was a creative non-conformist who had little respect for the rigidity of the rules of the psychoanalytic institution. Françoise Dolto was not a Lacanian, but she recognized the revolutionary nature of Lacan's ideas. She was impressed by how Lacan's analysands were able to work effectively with children because Lacan had an acute ear for primitive states within the adult. Lacan, for his part, held Françoise Dolto in esteem and frequently referred to her patients he found too difficult.

In December 1952, Jacques Lacan was elected provisional director of the new Institute of Psychoanalysis that had grown out of the SPP. This overturned an earlier election, deemed unconstitutional, which had appointed Sacha Nacht as director. Sacha Nacht and his followers wanted to reserve the diploma in psychoanalysis for those who were medically qualified. This was opposed by Laforgue's analysands who included Daniel Lagache and Françoise Dolto. In 1953, Lacan became president of the SPP and Nacht was re-elected president of the Institute. There followed a period of dissension amongst the students, led by Jenny Roudinesco, resulting in a petition delivered to Nacht and Lacan, complaining about the undemocratic nature of the Institute, and the paternalistic control exerted over the training, and demanding codification of the Institute's rules. Françoise Dolto supported the students, who wanted to ensure that students in receipt of bursaries would have the right to choose their own analyst. Lacan found himself in a minority on the training committee in his support of the students, and resigned, followed by Françoise Dolto, Daniel Lagache, and Juliette Favez-Boutonnier. In June 1953, Daniel Lagache formed the Société Française de Psychanalyse. None of the analysts who resigned from the SPP realized that in so doing they would lose their membership of the IPA.

It was during the XIIth IPA Congress in London, at which Françoise Dolto was to speak, that the president, Heinz Hartmann, refused membership of the IPA to those who had resigned from the SPP. Françoise Dolto was therefore not allowed to speak. A commission was set up to investigate the practice of each member who had resigned, including Lacan and Dolto. This commission included Winnicott, who was to interview Françoise Dolto to judge whether she was worthy to remain a member of the IPA. During this investigation, Lebovici made a public declaration that Françoise Dolto was a member of the communist party. This was a lie. In fact, it was Lebovici who had been a member of the French communist party before resigning in order to pursue his career as a consultant psychoanalyst. Lebovici's assertion was very damaging at the time when McCarthyism was rife in the USA, and Europe was also terrified by the spectre of Soviet communism. He also defamed Françoise Dolto's character by claiming that she spent her weekends in the company of her patients. In addition, as if it were a sign of moral turpitude, he accused her of being a Jungian .

She was let down by her fellow analysts, including Hartmann and Lagache, who knew her practice to be honourable; they were present when Lebovici slandered her but said nothing. She was disgusted by the narcissism of psychoanalytic institutions, and astonished by the falseness of people who by rights should be true to themselves, who seemed to be afraid, in her words, "of being alive" (Dolto, 1989, pp. 141–2). A committee of inquiry set up by the IPA, chaired by Winnicott, interviewed Françoise Dolto. Winnicott is said to have commented that he was interested in her work and found her innovative, but he reproached her for her wild creativity and said that "She has too much intuition and not enough method to be a teacher" (quoted in Roudinesco, 1986, p. 329). Thus, Françoise Dolto was excluded from the IPA, as was Lacan. It is puzzling as to why Winnicott was so damning of Dolto, especially given that they were both paediatricians working in the same field of primitive psychosomatic disturbance. Perhaps there was an element of rivalry in the decision. It is likely that the commission was suspicious of her

association with Lacan; also, that they would not have known what to make of a child analyst without the affiliations that they recognized, to Anna Freud or to Melanie Klein. Perhaps there was an element of machismo and fear in reaction to this clever, outspoken woman.

In response to the Commission's criticism, we see in *Autoportrait d'une psychanalyste* how important the idea of "method" (p. 183) is to her in the practice of psychoanalysis. Dolto never practised short sessions. In fact, she was very much against what she thought of as a potentially sadistic practice. She always took notes of her patients' dreams, annotating them like a musical score, always noting the detail, the repetitions and the transference. Also, she observed closely the psychosomatic communications within the analysis, the emergence of bodily dysfunctions, often relating them to the earliest experiences of life, before or after birth. She describes a compassionate and classical approach within psychoanalytic sessions, paying close attention to what her countertransference informs her of the patient's unconscious process, being very sensitive to the effect she has on the patient, as a person and as an analyst.

Undeterred by exclusion from the IPA, the SFP began to find its own voice. In 1953, Lacan gave a seminal paper in Rome, "*La function et le champ de la parole en psychanalyse*", to which Françoise Dolto responded by saying:

> With or without words, there is language . . . an infant, a few days old . . . expresses his contentment with responsive and meaningful noises . . . And if the mother mimics the same sound, echoing him, the infant receives and considers it. This exchange, this language . . . is a creative language which enables the infant to structure its sensations . . . which enables him to develop not into a mere digestive system but into a human being. (1989, p. 919)

Thus, she began to declare her profound belief in the vital nature of language, a belief which had already led her into talking to babies, and so dramatically relieving their anguish. For the next seventeen years she and Jacques Lacan had a fruitful, if uneasy, professional relationship. She remained within the organization that Lacan founded in order not to be alone, because she believed that to be an analyst one has to communicate with others. The positive result of exclusion from the IPA was freeing her to think for herself. In the years that followed, she developed her central and original contribution to psychoanalysis, *L'Image inconsciente du corps* (Dolto, 1984). It followed on from her work with very regressed children, in the course of which she noticed that their drawing displayed images of archaic foetal life and of the body as sensed within the first days of life. If the child is not born into language the *image du corps* is abandoned, resulting in severe disturbance. Throughout the 1950s, she held seminars for trainee analysts, extracts of which are to be found in the *Séminaires de psychanalyse d'enfants* (1985).

Yet again, in 1961, the IPA refused membership to the SPF. A new schism began to open up within the SPF, with certain members wanting to submit to the demands of the IPA. In 1962, Françoise Dolto's mother died. In 1963, Lacan and Dolto were excluded from the list of teachers at the SPF. Rather than accept the conditions imposed by the IPA, in December 1963, Lacan, followed by Leclaire, Dolto, Aulagnier, Aubry, Octave and Maud Mannoni, and many others, left the SFP, establishing, in 1964, l'Ecole Freudienne de Paris. Françoise Dolto led a seminar at the Ecole Freudienne for clinicians, supervising their work with difficult cases, many of which are recorded in her *Séminaires de psychanalyse d'enfants* (1982).

There followed a long and creative period of working as a clinician, teaching, broadcasting, writing, and involvement in social projects. In 1967, she gave a paper on a psychotic boy, Dominique, in a conference on infantile psychosis organized by Maud Mannoni in Paris. This conference was attended by R.D.Laing and other members of the anti-psychiatry

movement in Britain. Later, the paper was published as L*e Cas de Dominique*, and is hitherto one of only two books written by her published in English. Dolto was able to understand, by listening to Dominique's words, the meaning of his illness and its place within his family history. She described how his psychosis was a function of not having experienced the humanizing effects of benign castration, which had resulted in a malignant regression to an archaic body image.

From 1969, Dolto began to broadcast on French radio, first as Doctor X on Europe 1, to parents about the conflicts of childhood. In 1970, she participated in a programme, on *France Culture*, on the role of the father. In 1971, she participated in a televised debate supporting a proposed law to improve the legal status of children born out of wedlock. She is most well known in France for her broadcasts on *France-Inter, Lorsque l'enfant parait*; she broadcast for twelve minutes every day of the week for two years, answering parents' questions. She received about a hundred letters a week, which, if she could not deal with on air, she would reply to personally (Dolto, 2005, p. 925). It is interesting to note how her childhood love of the radio found its way into communicating her passion for the welfare of children.

Meanwhile, the EFP was in the throes of internal conflict; both Dolto and Lacan were growing old. In 1979, Françoise Dolto retired as a practising psychoanalyst and was unwell. Certain members wanted to dissolve the organization because of Lacan's authoritarian rule. Jacques-Alain Miller and Eric Laurent defined what was truly Lacanian, dismissing Dolto for turning psychoanalysis into "Good News", presumably an allusion to a certain evangelism in her attitude. Françoise Dolto opposed the dissolution of the school, but spoke out against what she perceived as a violent dogmatism that had developed amongst the followers of Lacan. She was in conflict with him, but remained his friend. In 1980, Lacan dissolved the EFP. Françoise Dolto never again belonged to a psychoanalytic organization. In 1981, Jacques Lacan died, a few months after the death of her husband, Boris Dolto.

Françoise Dolto was now approaching the end of her own life. She spent much of her time writing, publishing many books on her life's work. She had been able to create a work group which met regularly to discuss the problems particular to deaf children, which eventually, in 1983, became an association, *Communication Précoce Entendants et Non-Entendants*. Her flat was next to a school for deaf children, and she had long felt a deep concern for the plight of the deaf. After the dissolution of EFP, she held her seminars in this school, l'Institut des Jeunes Sourds.

Dolto realized one of her major life achievements in 1979 with the opening of the first Maison Verte in the 15th arrondissement in Paris. The Maison Verte was an original idea of Françoise Dolto's: it was to be a place where children younger than the age of three might socialize and play, without having to separate from their parent or carer, where their identity was respected, and where parents might speak of their anxieties with psychoanalytically informed staff. It was to be a place that was neither educational nor medical, without bureaucracy, with payment according to means, providing a space for the unconscious within the community. Since the opening of this first Maison Verte, more than a hundred have been opened throughout France and all over the world.

Conclusion

Françoise Dolto is an important figure in the development of infant and child psychoanalysis in the twentieth century. She was a brilliant clinician, particularly in her work with children who were severely disturbed. That she is not an influence in Anglo-Saxon countries is an enigma that the book *Theory and Practice in Child Psychoanalysis: an introduction to the work of Francoise Dolto* (2010) seeks to redress. That she became unacceptable to the IPA may be explained by her departure from strictly orthodox practice, by her loyalty to Lacan, and possibly by the conflict

between the nature of her religious beliefs and classical psychoanalytic theory. Given the deeply perceptive nature of her thinking and her success as a clinician, this does not reflect well on psychoanalysis. It could be argued that she did not defend herself sufficiently well against malicious rumour and the unfairness of her treatment. Indeed, there does appear to be a repetition in the behaviour of her colleagues towards her, notably Winnicott, and the dismissive and sometimes contemptuous attitude her mother held towards her. It may indeed be that she was afflicted by a form of survivor guilt, which meant that she never felt that she was fully entitled to belong to her family of origin. Whatever the reason, she was able to use her position as outsider creatively and productively, challenging the institutions of France, the family, the church, hospitals, schools, and universities to think psychoanalytically, in a way that is unparalleled in Anglo-Saxon countries, about the minds of children and young people and the suffering that they endure from the earliest days of their existence.

Françoise Dolto was a deeply spiritual practising Catholic. Her ideas about the subject of desire are radically different from those of Jacques Lacan. She believed that psychoanalysis could only have been created by someone from a Jewish spiritual tradition, within which Christianity finds its roots. Within these traditions there is no subject without God. She explains:

> There is no subject without God. If I exist, it is because God exists. I cannot exist without God. It is very curious that psychoanalysts do not realise this. Clearly for Lacan the subject is a hole; he was frightened of this void that was his version of the subject. But it is not true! What is true is that we will never know what the subject is if we do not recognise that it is a part of God incarnate. But the desire for life is God in each one of us. It is the subject before the word that appears with the word, not only the spoken word but that which comes into being with every significant act. So, to be incarnated is a meaningful act of a subject God. I don't see how it is possible to think otherwise. From within Christian folklore, not the thinking of the church, the meaning of the subject of the word or of the subject speaking to God, or of God responding, within the Bible, is equivalent to our understanding of the unconscious. (Dolto, 1989, p. 158)

She claimed that it was the experience of psychoanalysis that gave her faith, the capacity to live according to an unknowable truth, while accepting that which is unique and unforeseen: to have the ability to be aware of the awesome quality of life which destabilizes and disturbs.

Françoise Dolto had an inspired and fruitful life. She had a long and happy marriage and enjoyed her children and family. She died, according to her daughter Catherine, "lucid, joyful and serene", on the 25th August 1988.

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Michael Evans

Meditations around Painting and Psychotherapy

I have been reading a book by an eminent art historian who abandoned all the usual concerns of art history (for example influence, biography, dates, iconology, theory, patronage, exhibitions, critical reception and historical context). He decided to look at what actually goes on in the painter's studio, which traditionally is to do with oil paint. The book by James Elkins is titled *What Painting is: how to think about oil painting using the language of alchemy*.

Alchemy was originally the experimental mingling of juices extracted from plants and later the mixing of materials from the earth, an ancient practice focussing on the attempt to change base metals into gold. It had also a philosophical aspect as a search for the elixir of longevity and wisdom. So as a practice it was basically experimental in that there was no fixed outcome and it was intended to be transformative. The notion of alchemy provides a good metaphor to illuminate the practice of both psychotherapy and painting.

Oil paint, which is the stuff of painting, is mainly sourced from earth and clay. The commonest pigments were, and still are, umber, sienna, ochre, cobalt, titanium, cadmium and soot, all coloured powders sourced from the earth, and bound together with egg or gum, or in the case of oil paint with linseed. The combination of ground earth and ground seed produces a wonderful glistening viscous substance which by means similar to alchemy can be manipulated in a thousand ways to make metaphysical representations.

As I read this inspiring book I found myself wondering if it would be possible to reduce psychotherapy to its raw materials as one can when talking about painting. What does go on in the therapist's studio? What is the equivalent of the base material of oil paint and what is the alchemic process?

The material is clearly the physical presence of patient and therapist sitting together. There is a well known story about RD Laing in the USA. When being shown around a hospital the head psychiatrist asked Laing what he would do about a patient who sat on the floor in the corner of a room, unable to speak, and totally naked. Laing's response was to strip off his own clothes and sit beside her and put his arms around her. Now many would argue that, although courageous, this behaviour was acting out on the part of the therapist, that it broke all the boundaries and was totally against the rules. According to medical etiquette he should have turned to the psychiatrist in charge, a fellow professional, and said something along the lines of 'Well, I would first try to understand what this patient wanted to say and coax her into speaking for herself. I would want to reassure her that she was not alone. I would want to convey to her the idea that I was not a 'sane' person who regarded her as mad, but rather that there was no fundamental difference between us, that if the truth were known about my unconscious fears

and phantasies, we would be in the same place, and that she need not see me, a Doctor, as Other but as similar in that we both suffer the vicissitudes of life, etc. etc.' At the end of such a prolonged lecture the catatonic patient would still be sitting wretchedly in the corner and the psychiatrist would still have diagnosed Laing himself as at best irresponsible and possibly mad. But Laing's simple act was like an alchemic process, a metaphor, and like all good metaphors it condensed a volume of complex ideas into one simple and powerful image.

Sometimes the body is the material of the encounter in the room. I once had a patient who, from the couch, told me that since the previous session she had been regurgitating and chewing on her own excrement. I felt her disgust fully, yet her description did not horrify me as much as it did her because I have always regarded oil paint as a sort of shit. Both come in various shades of glorious brown or golden ochre, often muddy or lumpy and viscous and variously pleasurable or revolting to touch. Both get spread everywhere all too easily on to one's clothes and even the floor. It is the smell rather than the visual appearance that makes them different, and it is this and parental admonitions which discourage us from playing with our shit; adult painters with an interest in anal matters have to get their pleasure with oil and pigment instead. It may be they are in touch with their first stage of anal development, freely expelling faeces and conceiving of them as gifts.

A good example of this sublimated pleasure is to be found in the letters of John Constable where he described

> The sound of water escaping from mill-dams, etc willows, old rotten planks, slimy posts, and brickwork, I love such things... I shall ever seek to paint such places... painting is for me but another word for feeling, and I associate 'my careless boyhood' with all that lies on the banks of the Stour; those scenes made me a painter.

It is interesting that he quotes Wordsworth's reference to his own boyhood . Like the poet, Constable felt that the meaning of these identifications goes back to childhood, to being raised next to his father's watermill. Elsewhere, on passing some slimy posts near an old mill he said to a friend 'I wish you could cut off and send their tops to me'.

EH Gombrich, who was much taken with Constable, also quotes William James's pre-Freudian notion of how the mind makes associations and how a single image can become charged with multiple layers of meaning:

> As the bees swarming cling to one another in layers till the few are reached whose feet grapple the bough from which the swarm depends; so with the objects of our thinking - they hang to each other by associated links, but the original source in all of them is the native interest which the earliest one once possessed.

This striking image shows how associative ideas from the past gather others and can generate new meanings. I can relate to James's idea, for I have often seen a swarm of bees hanging from a bough and for me they look like a golden glistening mass of faeces constantly moving and changing shape as they fall and climb back up the weighed-down branch from which they temporarily hang.

Like Constable, Vincent van Gogh wrote of his passionate love of the chthonic aspect of the tactile and visible world. He wrote to his brother about the sight of black coal:

> I saw a magnificent and strange effect this evening. A very large boat laden with coal on the Rhone, moored at the quay. Seen from above it was all glistening and wet from a shower; the water was a white yellow and clouded pearl-grey, the sky lilac and an orange strip in the west, the town violet. On the boat small workman, blue and dirty white, were coming and going, carrying cargo ashore. It was pure Hokusai. It was too late to do it, but one day, when this coal boat comes back, it'll have to be tackled.

But to get back to my patient: the taste in her mouth and the associations were

revolting to her. Common sense told me that you cannot vomit faeces (and this was confirmed by my supervisor who had a medical background) but my patient obviously believed this was what was happening to her. Her symptoms were a condensation of unacceptable ideas about her relationship to feeding into a simple but powerful metaphor. But it was also a marked shift from previous sessions when other people and things were the object of her anger and disgusted her. It was a retreat from habitual attacks on a neighbour, but it was also a repetition of some aspect of a persecutory/traumatic relationship she had with her mother some 80 years previously. It was a return of the repressed material which she was struggling to digest rather than project it onto others, a psychosomatic symptom acting as a metaphor addressed to me, her therapist. To remark that what she said was an impossibility would have been inappropriate, so I had no need to interpret or comment much. She had communicated her feelings in a way that I could not fail to understand.

The essential thing in therapy is actually to be there. Picasso was asked what impelled him to go to his atelier, and he remarked that the alarm clock was a good invention. It is imperative to turn up punctually if one is a psychotherapist. Perhaps that level of reliability is all one has to fulfil, and the rest of it, the interpretations etc, are just vanity? The patient does the work. In the case of my patient cited above, if the telling was cathartic, maybe that was enough. But for alchemy to take place I think more is required.

In addition to 'being present', a phrase that in itself has more than one meaning, there is also receptivity. If you look up 'listening' in the general Index of Freud's collective works, you will find that it makes no appearance, but the word 'attention' was discussed by him in many papers. The Latin *attendere* meant 'to stretch toward'. In old French, *attendre* meant 'to give heed to'. In English by the 15th century attention had the sense of 'to take care of, or wait upon', also to 'direct one's mind or energies'. In modern English usage there are the unfortunate connotations around 'paying attention' at school, or 'standing to attention' in the military. Paying attention implies giving something up in exchange, and for a therapist that something could be a part of the ego. To listen (from Middle English), or 'listening' has a softer tone - less active perhaps. It is connected to the word 'list'. A ship might list in the wind, or the branches of a tree might not stand quite straight and list towards or away from one another. For me there is the connotation of leaning-towards, perhaps of empathy, in the word listen.

This reminds me of an experiential group I joined as part of a training to become a Samaritan. The requirement of the course was to show that we could listen, show restraint, and not make intrusive comments. When it was my turn to take part in a role play exercise I had an actor opposite me who played the part of a schizophrenic in a fairly extreme state of paranoia. As, in my youth, I had had a friend who suffered in this way I was able to recognise his behaviour - the hat low over his brow, his minimal and enigmatic statements and the talk of rays that threatened to penetrate his skull if he removed the hat. Very soon I forgot the dozen people watching and I was alone in a room with a madman. As the 'conversation' became ever more terse and sporadic we descended into a system of noises rather like animals grunting and in this way sustained some kind of human companionship for several minutes, except increasingly I felt only he was present and that I was an empty void. This was a symptom I recognised from being with my friend, a fellow art student many years ago. When the session was over and I suspended my willing suspension of disbelief, I was startled to see him turn back into an ordinary mortal, a jolly fellow, a 'resting' actor hired for the day. I had been drawn into an identification with whatever it was he had been identifying with - a kind of active listening.

In the early years of psychoanalysis Freud and Breuer experimented with hypnosis to bring into consciousness feelings that would otherwise be repressed. Later Freud, who said he wasn't very good at

hypnosis, found he could use his patients' dreams instead. But patients in extremis, like my elderly lady, sometimes confide their darkest feelings without any need for self censorship, and thereby achieve some relief. She said later on that I had done her some good, although in fact I had done next to nothing except witness her distress. I felt helpless in the wave of her anger and I guess this is what she felt too. But she found that being heard was cathartic.

Catharsis as a significant concept originated, so far as I know, with Aristotle. The Greek word meant to purge or to purify. Aristotle was justifying the role of the arts in society in his argument against Plato, who believed that all art was deceit, that it would over-stimulate the imagination and lead people into decadence and away from truth. Thus he banned all the arts from his ideal republic. Aristotle defended the arts with a counter-argument that the effect of art on the audience could be beneficial. They would identify with the extreme conflict endured by the protagonists of the drama and, as the ensuing tragedy unfolded, would respond with intense feelings of fear and pity. Each individual would thus be cleansed of their own pent up feelings. It was as if for Aristotle, drama was a form of group therapy. Similarly the conflicts expressed by the patient can resonate for the therapist.

A major therapeutic element of psychotherapy is that the therapist listens and of course there is more than one way of listening. The educational psychologist Jean Piaget distinguished focused receptivity from what he called 'syncretistic' vision. He was referring to a kind of unconscious scanning of the field of vision. I assume this distinction applies to listening as well as looking. It is not difficult to listen to sea shanties sung in unison, or the music of Karl Orff. But other kinds of music, for example the quartets of Beethoven or Mozart, present the listener with problems. There may be a melody that comes and goes. Often it is the 1st violin which grabs one's attention; then perhaps the cello takes up the theme; but all the time the other instruments are providing a sub-text, an alternative theme, related to the dominant one but not the same. If we focus on the main tune we miss what is underlying. If we listen to the sub-text we are distracted from the melody. Focussing seems to narrow us down and limit our appreciation. Only through syncretistic listening can we hear the whole effect in all its richness of sound.

It is the same with looking at architecture (which Goethe described as 'frozen music'). Some years ago I read that marvellous little book by John Summerson called *The Classical Language of Architecture*. I then wandered round many baroque churches in Rome to discover how the placing of pillars and pilasters on the ground plan directs the thrusts of verticals and the spaces between them, and how these movements are broken by the capitals and pediments, before another set of columns carries the eye on upwards to the top pediment. Summerson certainly added to my understanding and pleasure. And then, as I understood more of the detail, I found I was missing the whole effect. I needed to get a distance (not always possible in a crowded city) and from far off the thing as a whole became an object of beauty. It was a way of looking syncretically. But it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to appreciate the parts and the whole at the same time.

It is similar to the way children are fascinated by a story. They may not understand more than half but will take what they want from it and follow the structure of the story. Through repetition and picturing they gain more understanding. When I first read Eliot's 'The Waste Land' I didn't understand any bit of it or why it was there, and to a large extent I still don't. But if I listen syncretically and I catch the mood, then I get the message. Why do we want to understand everything anyway? Picasso asked this question:

> Everyone wants to understand painting. Why don't they try to understand the singing of the birds? Why do people love the night, a flower, everything that surrounds them, without trying to

> understand them? But painting - that they must understand

Likewise, when we listen to quartets we don't need to understand anything, but we are persuaded to listen syncretically. Perhaps we do not have to feel we should or can understand our patients.

Picasso said it took him 20 years to learn how to draw like a child. Here is a drawing by an eight year old girl learning to draw in the style of Picasso. The eyes and nose are oddly placed, but we know it is a portrait and has something characteristic of the sitter. Artist and viewer are engaged in

syncretic vision; a way of seeing where everything is wrong, but right.

There is a conflict between two kinds of looking as there is between two kinds of listening. If we listen in a syncretic way we are like a fox, alert to every movement across the field of vision. We might miss something important that is still. If, like a hedgehog, we focus on the details, we are narrowing down our attention obsessively to something specific, but might miss the overall picture. I am reminded of the Pre-Raphaelite vision where so often every detail is concentrated upon with great effort only to produce the most mundane result, while the larger relationships and rhythms of the whole scene are entirely over looked. Can we do both at the same time? Painters often attend to the subject and to the background at the same time. The positive and negative shapes are given complementary value. Perhaps this comes naturally, perhaps they retain a faculty from childhood, or they may have to cultivate it. The analyst also attends both to what is in the foreground and also to the underlying context, even to what is not being said.

Freud in his *Papers on Technique* expressed, in a down to earth way, his recommendations about listening . It consists simply in not directing one's notice to anything in particular but in maintaining the same 'evenly-suspended' attention to everything one hears. He wrote:

> For as soon as anyone deliberately concentrates his attention to a deliberate degree, he begins to select from the material before him; one point will be fixed in his mind with particular clearness and some other will be correspondingly disregarded, and in making this selection he will be following his expectations or inclinations. This is however precisely what should not be done. In making his selection he is in danger of never finding anything but what he already knows.... It must not be forgotten that the things one hears are for the most part things whose meaning is only recognised later on... or to put it more simply.... he should simply listen, and not bother whether he is keeping anything in his mind.

Freud, again, wrote:

> Cases which are devoted from the first to scientific purposes and are treated accordingly suffer in their outcome; while the most successful cases are those in which one proceeds, as it were, without any purpose in view, allows oneself be taken by surprise by any new turn in them, and always meets them with an open mind, free from any presupposition.

When a painter looks at his subject in nature and back at his canvas, he has to find a way of seeing which is not just about detail or local colour, however interesting those things may be. As a painter, I try to respond to the relationship between one thing and another: how colours can change in proximity to one another, and how rhythms can connect forms and sometimes seem to break them up. There is a story about the

painter Eugene Delacroix: he was labouring on a painting which had many yellows in it. The colours appeared to him to lack luminosity, however much yellow impasto he added. He decided to look at a Rubens to see how he had tackled yellow and called a cab to take him to the Louvre. As he was about to step into the cab his eye caught the effect of the bright yellow wheels and he noticed how the gravel in the shadows between the spokes appeared quite violet and intensified the yellows. Two colours mutually affect each other, later termed 'simultaneous contrast'. Problem solved: Delacroix dismissed the cab, returned to his studio and added violet hues in the shadows to complement his yellows. He had rediscovered what he probably already knew, that it was the relationships rather than the parts that mattered.

Likewise, Paul Cezanne's approach to looking at his subject is a way of scanning that is akin to Freud's way of listening, although the process of painting itself is necessarily rather more active. Here are some extracts from a conversation between Cezanne and a young admirer, Joachim Gasquet in the late 1890s.

> I advance all my canvas at one time, if you see what I mean. And in the same movement, with the same conviction, I approach all the scattered pieces From all sides, here, there and everywhere, I select colours tones and shades; I set them down, I bring them together - they make lines. They become objects - rocks, trees - without my thinking about them. They take on volume, value. If, as I perceive them, these volumes and values correspond on my canvas to the planes and patches of colour that lie before me, that appear to my eyes, well then my canvas joins hands. It holds firm. It aims neither too high or too low. It is true, dense, full ... but if there is the slightest distraction, the slightest hitch, above all if I interpret too much in one day, if I am carried away by a theory which contradicts yesterday's, if I think while I am painting, if I meddle, then whoosh!, everything goes to pieces.

Cezanne also wrote:

> The artist is nothing more than a receptacle of sensations, a brain, a recording machine --- a damned good machine, fragile and complex, above all in its relationship with other machines ... but if he intervenes, if he dares to meddle voluntarily with what he ought merely to be translating, he introduces his own insignificance into it and the work is inferior ... Maybe I am wrong to run on like this ... no more theories! Work! Theories are man's downfall! You need a powerful constitution and inexhaustible energy to withstand them.

In these conversations Cezanne was speaking about the kind of painting he practised, but he could have been speaking of psychotherapy. He becomes a receptacle, approaching the other with evenly suspended attention, avoiding becoming fixated on specifics, and avoiding intellectualism, but allowing something to emerge. Freud suggested that we shouldn't try too hard. This might be understood as a paradox: for how can we achieve a form of listening or looking which is so difficult, yet do so without effort? But really it should be simple because it is a matter of giving oneself over to the relationship, and hoping that some sort of alchemy will take place.

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