The integration and disintegration of mind and body has fascinated me ever since I began to study psychology half a century ago. Even as a child I was curious about how it was that some people seemed at home in their bodies while others seemed to inhabit them only with ill grace, as if their bodies were on temporary loan.

As a young man I witnessed the devastation of minds and bodies and bodies politic in Europe during World War II. After the war I lived, worked and studied in Paris for a number of years. My sense of my own unintegration that began in my childhood and my interest in altered states and transformations was compounded by my disruptive experiences as a GI: the sudden confrontation with life and death and the abrupt immersion in the strange and unfamiliar culture of a war-torn Europe.

I remember the culture shock that I experienced after the war when I was going to school on the GI Bill at the Sorbonne. In the United States, I had been given a taste of English literature from Beowulf to Thomas Wolfe in one crowded semester. In Paris, the professor wrote one line of poetry on the blackboard and this line, examined from many aspects, was our text for the year. As an impressionable young man, I was smitten by what I saw as the European way of doing things, and it took me a long time to integrate these two different perspectives.

But the existence of multiple perspectives became a given in my own life, and my thought was fueled by the postwar thinkers, political scientists, and poets who were all, in their own ways, trying to see if any sense could be made of the great psychological traumas of the war and the Holocaust. Thus I became interested not only in Freud, at a time
in the 1950s when his presence dominated American psychiatry, but also in the great analytic traumatologists, such as Ferenczi and Winnicott, who seemed to me to be dealing with the very issues that I found so pressing.

When I returned to America I tried my hand at a number of pursuits, including writing, comparative literature and film making, all of which I found very interesting but none of which grabbed me. To help understand what was going on, I began my first analysis and this soon inflamed me to become a psychologist.

Luckily, my first analyst was not rigidly trained, so he neither interpreted this desire away nor dissuaded me from my ambition. I enquired and learned that the NYU Clinical Program was at that time considered tops in the country, so I applied there despite never having taken a course in psychology and despite assurances from the department that my chances for admission were infinitesimal. I afterwards learned that in the end I had been accepted under their policy of admitting one “oddball” each year.

At NYU I happened by good luck to stumble into the Research Center for Mental Health where George Klein, Robert Holt, David Rapaport, and others were conducting cutting-edge research into psychoanalytic theory. I was excited and fascinated by the ongoing studies of alternate states of consciousness; of dream imagery, of LSD trances and of subliminal stimulation. I was intrigued also by our ill-fated attempt to increase the sale of popcorn at movies by subliminally projecting EAT POPCORN! on the screen. The atmosphere in which we all thrived was that of an academic, grant-supported, and research-oriented think-tank with a slightly nutty character, exemplified in my mind by a distinguished-looking Middle European psychiatrist who used to come to his laboratory
cubicle on occasional afternoons, unpack an ancient violin, and dreamily play selected arias to experimental subjects while releasing vials of perfume in pursuit of his investigations into sensory synesthesia.

By contrast, the seminars that David Rapaport gave us on Chapter VII of Freud’s dream book were unparalled examples of Old World scholarship. Rapaport would distribute two or three questions about the two pages of Freud that were our text for the week. Although our small group was composed of some of the most distinguished scholars around, including George Klein and Robert Holt, to the best of my recollection hardly anyone every answered a question to the satisfaction of Rapaport, who would bolster his arguments by quoting chapter, page and verse from memory. Two years later when I applied to be his research assistant at Austen Riggs and told him that I had spent a month reading Erickson’s Childhood and Society, he responded that he read that book with his class at the New England Institute, but of course they took a whole year during which they usually only finished the first chapter or two.

When in 1957 I interned at Jacobi Hospital in the Bronx, I had a chance to experience not only the immense variety of pathology on display in a city hospital, but also to encounter many of the greatest analysts of the day including Mahler, Greenacre, Jacobson and Hartman, some of whom would frequently come up to do Grand Rounds. The training I received at Jacobi and Einstein was first-rate and absolutely invaluable and I became best friends with two psychiatrists there, William Grossman and also Lester Schwartz with whom I later wrote a paper on the Marquis de Sade. But I also had my first taste of discrimination against non-medical people there because of the rigid hierarchical system that then prevailed in most all hospitals and institutes. There were many restrictions on psychologists doing
psychotherapy and even after I became licensed it took about two years of active politicking before I was given permission, only as an exception, to open a private practice while still at the hospital.

Working with the extraordinary analytic thinkers whom I met there was a heady experience. When I finished my doctorate I wanted to apply to the New York Psychoanalytic Institute for training but found that as a psychologist I could only be given “research” training and would have to sign a pledge never to actually practice psychoanalysis. At that time a number of my colleagues went along with this requirement, received excellent training and are of course now practicing, but somehow I found this requirement unacceptable and instead enrolled in the NYU Postdoctoral Program in Psychoanalysis that was just opening. This was, I believe, the first University-based psychoanalytic program in the country. Its initial class enrolled some candidates who had been waiting for years for the opportunity to obtain this kind of official training in psychoanalysis; an historic event for psychologists.

The moving force behind NYU Postdoc was Bernie Kalinkowitz, although many others, including a number of medical analysts, worked very hard to make it happen. Many of these early candidates were more mature and experienced than typical postdoctoral students at the time and among them I was lucky enough to find my peer group. This group, consisting of Bert Freedman, Mark Grunes, Marty Nass, Irv Steingart, myself and now Steve Ellman, has met once a month now for over forty years. We have

1 That was in 1960, but times have changed. I recently learned I had been awarded the Heinz Hartmann Scholar Prize for 2007 from this same Institute, which for many years now has welcomed psychologists for training without restrictions.
voraciously consumed large tracts of the psychoanalytic literature and also discussed many of our own papers, for we turned out to be a productive group. Over the years we have also voraciously consumed large quantities of food and good wine for, as Heinz Hartmann noted in a letter to Kohut, one of the few compensations for the discomforts of aging is that the wines you drink tend to get better and better. While I used to feel that Hartmann’s principle of primary autonomy was his major contribution to theory, I now feel that for me his principle of vinous compensation is, perhaps, of greater significance.

As for my personal views on psychoanalysis, I was trained in the Freudian tradition and still feel that my roots are there and that a dynamic way of thinking remains an underlying second nature for any analyst. If Freud were alive today he would be writing very differently than he wrote in 1939, for he understood the very provisional nature of his thinking better than most of his followers did. Some other great influences on my thinking and practice have been Ferenczi, Balint and Winnicott, many poets and artists of all descriptions, and the infant researchers and observers who have begun to discover the non-verbal rhythms of life and to translate them into ways of being with our patients.

When I first opened my private practice in 1962, I worked for a few hours into the night after a full day at the hospital. Naturally my first referrals were recently-discharged patients so I found myself treating severely disturbed people before the advent of psychotropic drugs. Amazingly, these people appeared to get better at a rate that seems little different than it is today, but of course I have not done a controlled study and perhaps my memory fails me here. We should recall, however, that there is now plenty of hard evidence that being with people and talking with them
in the right way can change their brain chemistry in ways similar to psychotropic drugs, sometimes with fewer negative side effects.

My early experience with patients usually regarded as difficult or intractable influenced me enormously because I found that the model of classical psychotherapy I had been taught worked well enough with certain people but was ineffective or even downright harmful with others. Not wanting to be in the position of asserting that my treatment was correct and that it was the patient who was either at fault or untreatable, I began to explore different ways of viewing the therapeutic situation.

I was impressed primarily with my mishandling of narcissistic vulnerabilities and as I was trying to reflect on this I stumbled first upon Kohut and then upon Winnicott. Kohut’s work was an immediately accessible revelation to me and seemed to spell out the direction my thoughts had been taking. I later had the privilege of meeting him and of speaking at some self-psychology conferences. When Mahler somehow heard that I was going to Chicago, she summoned me to her office to tell me to explain to Kohut that Mahler thought he was wrong about separate lines of narcissistic development. She seemed convinced that if I told him what she thought, he would change his mind.

As important as Kohut’s discoveries were and still are, to me the picture always seemed a bit more complicated and eventually I turned to Winnicott for guidance. I was there in 1968 when he gave his famous talk at the New York Psychoanalytic Society on The Use of an Object, a talk that was met with incomprehension and bewilderment, even by Edith Jacobson whom I so much admired. I also found the paper intriguing but confusing, primarily because my experience of the way he was managing patients was not yet sufficient to comprehend his theory.
Eventually I tried to formulate my evolving understanding in a 1977 paper, The Narcissistic State of Consciousness and in a book, Narcissistic States and the Therapeutic Process in 1985. I found that working with narcissism led inevitably to dealing with sadomasochism and perversions. After seeing many people with sadomasochistic leanings and perversions and thinking it over for a number of years I published my tentative views in The Language of Perversion and the Language of Love in 1995. While I have always been primarily interested in how one works with challenging patients in the clinical situation, treating sadomasochism and perversions unsurprisingly leads to questions about the nature of love and the particularly vexing question of love in the analytic situation. That is the subject matter of my most recent book, Getting from Here to There: Analytic Love, Analytic Process.

All in all, I have been working in the area of psychology for more than fifty years now, and for more than 46 years as an analytic candidate or psychoanalyst. I continue to practice, teach and supervise because I find it utterly fascinating and, aside from plentiful vacations, I cannot imagine what else I could be doing with my time that would be more gratifying. I think that we in this field have very special obligations but also very special privileges, and that one of our privileges is the opportunity to obtain a unique view on the human mind at work.

Contrary to the usual pessimism encountered these days, I am optimistic about the future of psychoanalysis because I cannot believe that methods of healing people by talking with them are ever going to disappear, notwithstanding the current co-optation of the field by the pharmaceutical-industrial complex. Psychoanalysis has long been in a self-imposed isolation from which it is now seems to be emerging. Today it is forging ties with
neuroscience, academic attachment research, early infancy programs and other real-world involvements. We have amassed over a hundred years of reflection, experience and research by some of the best scientists of the time on the subjective aspects of the human mind, and we have inherited an incomparably diverse literature. I believe that so long as people continue to think, this effort will not be lost.

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