

Good morning. I am Hillel Swiller and it is my pleasure to welcome you to Symposium 2010, Love, Sex and Passion: The Anatomy of Desire.

I want to tell you about an interesting experience I had recently. I spent part of the week before last in San Diego. You can't be a tourist in San Diego without going to the zoo, so I went to the zoo. When I got to the box office I was horrified to see that the cost of an adult admission was \$35. I said to the fellow in the box office, "That's a lot of money. Do you have a senior discount?" He said, "No, we have no discounts, but tell me, what do you do for a living?" I said, "I'm a psychoanalyst." He said, "Come right in, there's no charge." I said, "That's very nice, but why is there no charge just because I'm a psychoanalyst?" He said, "This is the zoo and you are part of an endangered species."

In addition to welcoming you to this symposium, I want to welcome you to our host institution, The Mount Sinai Medical Center. Sinai is one of the world's leading centers for research in biological psychiatry and neurobiology. Wayne Goodman, Chair of our Department of Psychiatry, Dennis Charney, Dean of our medical school and Kenneth Davis, CEO of the medical center are all leading researchers in these fields. Sinai is in the process of creating a new Brain Institute led by Eric Nestler and staffed by an extraordinary team of scientists. Our Department of Psychiatry has

research grants of 23.9 million dollars, 19.9 million of that is NIH money and the department ranks 11th of 91 psychiatry departments nationally. Our separate Department of Neuroscience has 15.1 million dollars in NIH grants ranking 4th national. The Brain Institute is too new for me to give you meaningful figures.

I know that some of you are now thinking, why is he telling us this? Who cares? What does this have to do with psychoanalysis?

Good question. In fairness, I already answered that question. My joke was not about a joking matter. You, I, all of us are part of an endangered species. Every one here is here because of a genuine interest in psychoanalysis. How many here have the kind of genuine psychoanalytic practice that was so common in the 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s? In the words of Borat, “Not so much.”

Are we going to allow our endangered species to be driven to extinction or are we going to find ways to flourish anew?

No field of knowledge is currently growing more explosively than neuroscience and biological psychiatry. In my opinion we either strive to understand and integrate this new knowledge into our field or we are headed for the history museums.

Do we want to toward philosophy and the ivory tower or remain firmly based in the house of healing. If nothing else, the consequences for funding the psychoanalytic enterprise are clear.

I believe the productive, vibrant future of psychoanalysis requires the understanding, appreciation, integration and application of the fruits of this kind of research. Psychoanalysis can, and I believe must, continually reinvigorate its character as a science as well as an art if it is to continue to flourish. Here at Sinai, in the midst of all this superb scientific research we have worked out a relationship with the New York Psychoanalytic Institute – no small task. More importantly, we have established a Division of Psychotherapy within our Department of Psychiatry whose primary purpose is to do just that. Several members of our Division are among this conference’s faculty. Sinai’s attention to and nourishing of psychoanalysis and all aspects of psychotherapy is a model for the way forward. Mutual respect by and for researchers and clinicians is essential if the advances of neuroscience are to be successfully translated into benefit for patients.

Richard Dawkins pointed out that the human body, and every other corporeal entity is just a gene’s way of making more genes. You may not have an immortal soul, but the information contained in your genes is immortal. That immortality is being achieved, in small part, by the creation

of the most complex object in the known universe, the human brain. That brain generates the mind. And that is subject of our work as psychoanalysts and part of that is the subject of this Symposium.

It is what Dylan Thomas called, “The force that through the green fuse drives the flower.” That energy, that genetically encoded information, underlies “Love, Sex and Passion. Psychoanalysis began as the psychology closest to biology. Its origins were all about looking below surface rationality to our instinctual pre-human nature. We continue to do that and as our understanding of biology grows so shall psychoanalysis.

Finally, I want to congratulate Arnie Richards, Ahron Friedberg, Elizabeth Ronis, Ken Winarick and the entire organizing committee for putting together such a wonderful symposium.

I look forward, as you do, to a most interesting, informative and therapeutically valuable conference.

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Mount Sinai Medical Center