

INTRODUCTION

PSYCHOANALYTIC DIALOGUE: ONE PSYCHOANALYSIS OR MANY

Robert Wallerstein & Leo Rangell

Moderator: Arnold Richards

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It is both a privilege and a challenge to moderate a dialogue between two such eminent contributors to contemporary psychoanalysis as Robert Wallerstein and Leo Rangell. Each has a curriculum vitae that would fill a long journal article. Both men are giants in the field. Dr. Wallerstein's recent book, Forty-two Lives in Treatment, presents the results of a study unparalleled in scope and probably not to be replicated in our lifetime. Of Dr. Rangell's many contributions, I will mention only the two-volume collection of his papers, entitled The Human Core. It is a monumental work bearing witness to his seminal influence on topics as diverse as theory building, symptom formation, and applied psychoanalysis.

What is noteworthy about these distinguished contributors is the strikingly parallel paths their careers have taken. Both hail from New York, and both are Phi Beta Kappa graduates of Columbia College. After their tours of duty in the army, Dr. Rangell settled in California, Dr. Wallerstein in Topeka. But in 1966, Dr. Wallerstein too moved to California, where both men have spent the bulk of their professional careers.

Their analytic training has followed similarly parallel paths. Both were trained within the ego psychology paradigm of American analysis. Dr. Rangell began his training at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute when

Hartmann, Kris, and Lowenstein were the central figures there; he completed his training at the Los Angeles Institute, where Otto Fenichel was then the central figure. Dr. Wallerstein received his analytic training at the Topeka Psychoanalytic Institute, which owes so much to David Rapaport.

Both have served as President of the American Psychoanalytic Association, Leo in fact serving two separate terms, in 1961-62 and 1966-67. Both have likewise served as President of the IPA, Leo for consecutive two-year terms and Bob for a four-year term that has recently just expired.

Among the issues that have engaged both men throughout their careers, the relationship between psychoanalysis and psychotherapy may be singled out. Both have written extensively on the topic, Dr. Wallerstein most recently in a paper in the International Journal summarizing the history of the relationship, and both have been in essential agreement about the nature of this relationship. I will mention as an aside that during the decade 1975-1985, when Dr. Wallerstein chaired the UCSF department of psychiatry, he arranged a clinical appointment for Dr. Rangell, who came to the university once a month to give, together with him, a seminar for psychiatry residents on this very topic.

Now all of this raises what for me is an intriguing

question. How can we account for the fact that these two eminent analysts, with such strikingly similar backgrounds, training experiences, and professional interests, now find themselves in radical disagreement on the important issue that concerns us here today: the implications for the field of the rival theories that now populate the psychoanalytic landscape, our present state of what I would term "psychoanalytic pluralism"?

To place this afternoon's discussion in context, let me speak briefly about the current state of psychoanalysis, and then summarize our panelists' positions within the context of their dialogue today. I will be as succinct as possible, basing my comments on our two panelists' most recent contributions in this area: Dr. Wallerstein's papers, "One Psychoanalysis or Many?" and "Common Ground," and Dr. Rangell's, "The Future of Psychoanalysis" and "Transference and Theory."

A word about the format of the panel. Dr. Rangell and Dr. Wallerstein will present opening statements of about 25 minutes each. We will then spend a half hour or so listening to a dialogue between the two of them. After that, they will respond to questions from the audience, thus interacting with you and, in that context, no doubt continuing the dialogue between themselves. It will expedite the discussion if you write out questions and submit them to

me, but I will try to reserve time at the end of the panel for direct discussion between the audience and the presenters. We have been allotted three hours for this program, and I suspect that we will use every minute of it.

The science of psychoanalysis founded by Sigmund Freud is now a field of rival theories. This trend, which Robert Michels has termed theoretical pluralism in psychoanalytic dialogue, shows no sign of abating. We are now a discipline consisting of classical analysts, object relations analysts, relational analysts, interpersonal analysts, self psychologists, Kleinian analysts, and Lacanian analysts, to name the proponents of only the most important theories. In one sense, theoretical ferment as witnessed by lively dialogue at our meetings and in the pages of our journals is constructive. To some extent, I believe, the vitality of any science is measured by the vigor with which key issues are debated. The status of psychoanalysis as a conglomeration of divergent theories, each of which claims, at times stridently, to be psychoanalytic, has evoked varying responses. Today we have the opportunity to consider two different responses to this fact of theoretical pluralism: Robert Wallerstein's espousal of a clinical common ground and Leo Rangell's advocacy of what he calls "total composite psychoanalytic theory." Since each of these solutions to theoretical pluralism involves a philosophical decision about

the status of psychoanalytic knowledge, it is important to bear in mind the difference between correspondence and coherence theories of truth. The former holds that truth consists of the correspondence between an object and its description. Long equated with realism, this theory takes as its basic premise the view that objects are able to cause our senses to form more or less accurate observations of objects as they actually exist. Since a real world exists and can be perceived, the correspondence theory maintains that viewpoints can be objectively tested. Scientists from Galileo and Newton through Darwin, Einstein, and Freud have held to a correspondence theory. Extended to the realm of psychoanalysis, the correspondence theory holds that minds and mental functioning are part of nature.

Proponents of a coherence theory of truth, on the other hand, maintain that objects in the world make sense only within a theory of description. This theory has it that truth has to do with the coherence of beliefs with each other and with our experiences as these exist within belief systems. Truth does not correspond to some mind-independent "objective" state of affairs. The key epistemological premise here is that our ways of thinking and perceiving unavoidably condition what we observe. Facts themselves are theory-bound; observations are understandable only within a context. Thus, advocates of the coherence theory of truth

believe that can be more than one "true" description of the world. Within philosophy, this theory has been equated with idealism; among its proponents are Kuhn, Feyerabend, Putnam, Ricoeur, and Merleau-Ponty. Within psychoanalysis it has gained expression in hermeneutic theories that replace psychic determinism with uncaused choice, for example, those of Roy Schafer and Arnold Goldberg.

Robert Wallerstein's response to theoretical pluralism in psychoanalysis is to argue for a unity of clinical purpose and clinical understanding that subsumes theoretical diversity. He maintains that the shared definitional boundaries of analysis involve the facts of transference and resistance understood from the point of view of conflict. Invoking Joseph and Anne-Marie Sandler's distinction between the past unconscious and the present unconscious, he argues that clinical theory bearing on the present unconscious and guiding day-to-day therapeutic work constitutes the unity among analysts. By contrast, the general theoretical perspectives that address the past unconscious and aim at "a more causally developmental account of life from its earliest fathomable origins" account for the diversity among analysts. For Wallerstein, these overarching theories, including self psychology, object relations theory, and Kleinian psychoanalysis, are metaphors, albeit scientifically necessary metaphors that "we have created in

order to satisfy our variously conditioned needs for closure and coherence and overall theoretical understanding." Wallerstein's belief that analysis must for the time being rest content with the fact of theoretical diversity does not preclude mediation among theories that will eventually result in "one true psychoanalytic theory that corresponds to reality." His point is that analysis as a scientific enterprise is still in its infancy, so that the various theoretical perspectives are not yet "amenable to comparative and incremental scientific testing." Wallerstein's view is that for now we must accept multiple theories as different explanatory metaphors, each heuristically useful to its proponents.

In reading Wallerstein one discerns a tension between his personal commitment to psychoanalysis as "the science of the mind" and his realization that analysts are having more and more difficulty resolving divergent theoretical perspectives in a way that can assure solidarity within the profession. On the one hand, he appreciates the ways in which a given theoretical perspective is intellectually satisfying and heuristically useful to its proponents; on the other hand, he speaks of a time when theories will evolve "beyond the metaphoric and therefore scientifically untestable status that now characterizes them, leading in the direction of a greater correspondence with the

theory meets the requirements of a correspondence theory of truth. In relation to Fred Pine's recent additive approach to theory choice, Rangell would assert that his total psychoanalytic theory includes considerations of drive, ego, object, and self, but includes them in a balanced and nuanced way that attends to the richly interactive relationships among these four realms.

It follows that Rangell considers total psychoanalytic theory adequate to the challenge of clinical work with patients of all types, even those included within the widening scope of psychoanalysis. By contrast, theorists like Kohut, Gedo, Mitchell, and Greenberg have assessed the scientific and clinical adequacy of Freud's formulations less generously in identifying the need for new psychoanalytic theories.

In summary, we may contrast the positions of Wallerstein and Rangell on the issue of theoretical pluralism as follows. For Wallerstein, there is one operational, experience-near theory that joins together analysts who espouse different metatheories. These latter are heuristically useful metaphors that help analysts organize the data of observation according to their own sensibilities. Wallerstein believes that our similarities as psychoanalytic clinicians enable us to live comfortably for the time being with these diverse metaphors. For Rangell, on the other

patients, self psychology for narcissistic patients, object relations theories for borderline patients, and so forth. Roy Schafer, for his part, takes issue with the very imperative of searching for common ground. For him, the search implies a "generally conservative value system that turns us away from the creative and progressive aspects of the struggle between different systems of thought and practice." Rather than aiming for "a single master text for psychoanalysis," we are better advised, according to Schafer, to accept "the sense that our differences show us all the things that psychoanalysis can be even though it cannot be all things at one time for any one person." From this view, each school of thought has something to offer in helping us to understand our patients analytically.

The current psychoanalytic Zeitgeist, then, has given rise to various understandings of, and responses to, the fact of psychoanalytic theoretical diversity. Some contributors believe that analysts must have a great deal in common; others believe that analysts must be resigned for the time being to having very little in common; others believe that analysts cannot in principle have much in common; and still others opine that analysts ought not to have much in common. Dr. Rangell and Dr. Wallerstein will, I am sure, be insightfully addressing all of these possibilities while putting forth their respective solutions to the challenge of

theoretical diversity.

In closing, I suggest tht we keep in mind the basic questions of theory and practice that we would like the ensuing dialogue to answer or at least address. We might keep in mind, in particular, the implications of this dialogue for our clinical work. Although Dr. Wallerstein and Dr. Rangell have presumably been asked to engage in this dialogue because their positions appear to be divergent, we should be receptive to the possibility that their differences may be more apparent than real. We may find, for example, that their differences are not significant for our clinical enterprise, even though they may be consequential for theory-building and even for psychoanalytic research strategies.

Without further ado, then, I am privileged to introduce _____ to begin what promises to be an exciting and enriching dialogue.