EDITORIAL

This issue was initially conceived as a consideration of the impact of national differences in manifestations of theoretical and clinical perspectives. The idea that orientations of a potentially national stamp could give distinctive shape to the theoretical assumptions of psychoanalytic thinking and to specific clinical practices and techniques proved impracticable, but the assumption that there are different theoretical cultures and that they map different forms of analytic practice has been loosely adhered to.

An identification of significant directions in the use of psychoanalytically informed scholarship across the range of disciplines in which its place has become fundamental was then attempted, without any attempt to link those arenas or propose a united, still less a preferred, field of study. The resultant collection, somewhat inaptly titled, brings together some of these themes.

The current publicity accorded to psychoanalysis and to Freud himself is a prominent feature of the 1990s. Much of this work has exposed alleged failures of scientificity, of hypocrisy and worse. Apparently in crisis from within and without, psychoanalysis as a diverse terrain of interlocking perspectives, goals and interests is faced with a continuing challenge to established positions. In the face of claims of its widely announced demise however, psychoanalysis has never been more recognized in British intellectual life. But the exposure and the accusations of the last period can not interfere substantially with the shift in ways of thinking and understanding the world and the individual's relation to it, that the Freudian discoveries made available. Through an insistence on our commonality with others, Freud provided the conceptual tools for thinking the complexity of each individual's capacity to construct and organize a distinctive, and distinctively different personal history. For some, the experience of being in analysis offers the possibility of a reorganization, a potential restructuring of that history; for others, it remains the only slim hope in a world of mental chaos and anguish. The general framework was established through Freud's success in his study of himself, his self-analysis, and in his ability to develop further the scientific and medical knowledge of his day. In the course of alleviating the suffering of his patients – something he did with mixed success – he discovered a technique for understanding mental distress. By demonstrating the complexity of each individual through the common creativity involved in being human, he established the fluidity and precariousness of the boundaries of normality and abnormality, bringing about a transformation of ideas of the person and his/her place in the world. Across the range of specialist knowledges which structure the late twentieth century experience, this achievement remains. One thing that unites the disparate contributions gathered here is their recognition of that achievement and its effects for how we approach both the study of the variety of the world we inhabit and the complexity of the aetiology of mental illness.

A recognition of the centrality of Freud, salutary though it may be in a climate of constant exposure of his alleged fraudulence, can be no foundation for agreement or the consolidation of approach. A multiplicity of disciplines, each with its own accounts, draw upon Freud; they are paralleled by competing claims to represent orthodoxy on the part of the institutions and organizations of practitioners. University disciplines and the beginnings of regulation, both state and European, of the set of therapeutic practices which, in England, go under the designations psychoanalysis, psychoanalytic psychotherapy, and of analytical psychotherapy, (a professional boundary dispute held in place by the acknowledged and ascribed status of the Institute of Psychoanalysis), address two significant contemporary arenas of practice and scholarship. Neither of these poles represents a conflict-free arena; each, in disagreement over their compatibility with the other, is also riven with internal dissension. The history of the psychoanalytic movement, its institutional prevarication, its professional rivalries, its theoretical divergences, its ostracism or censorship of its rebels, demonstrates this across a century-wide sweep. It is a situation that is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

An academic focus that includes the clinic through developments in metapsychological considerations about the mind, and through the emphases of clinical material, has not been widely available in Britain, where the split between psychoanalysis as practice and the psychoanalysis of theoretical cultures that address Freud has been artificially maintained, with detriment to both. In such a context, we are particularly pleased to publish two contributions, the panel report by Juliet Mitchell, Joan Raphael-Leff, Margot Waddell and Joanna Ryan, and Malcolm Bowie's paper on *Civilization and its Discontents*[1], which were presented as part of the innovative programme of conferences currently being organized by the Freud Museum in London. This programme is a welcome initiative, since all these events have been explicitly concerned to bridge this gap between psychoanalysis as a clinical practice and psychoanalysis as a major theoretical and cultural dimension of twentieth century life.

In the conclusion to *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault, in asserting the omni-presence of death in modern medicine, refers to the importance of Bichat, Jackson and Freud for European culture, not as proof that they were philosophers, but that, 'in this culture, medical thought is fully engaged in the philosophical status of man.'[2] Firstly then, despite the failure of British medicine and its associated disciplines to recognize the theoretically soaked cultural position of their assumptions and practices, the clinic remains a fundamental arena. Through its accounts of health and disturbance, of normality and abnormality, of the alleviation of suffering and of cure, of scientific understanding or therapeutic concern, psychoanalysis offers one of the most significant accounts of the genesis of health and illness, of the centrality of the mind and its development, of the links between predispositional states and environmental care and of the specifically personal, psychical resolution of that constellation for the evolution of the adult

1. S. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, published in the *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works, Volume XXI*, trans. James Strachey, Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, London 1953–74.

2. M. Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*, Vintage Books, New York 1973, p198.

individual, and the capacity to live, to love, and to work satisfactorily. Freud mostly evades some of the more grossly normative underpinnings that dominate some modern psychoanalytic accounts and even his interest in the spheres of culture and creativity is indissolubly linked to his quest for an understanding of the functions of the mind, and the paths it chooses and why. Malcolm Bowie's piece, given at the Freud Museum conference 'On Memory and the Archive' in July 1994, approaches *Civilization and its Discontents* as a great piece of twentieth century writing. What Bowie, following Bion, calls memory and desire, are discussed through the double prism of Freud's own literariness, his persistent involvement as cultural critic and lover of the artefact on the one side, and on the other, his place as proponent of a revolutionary schema of the human mind that incorporates and necessitates the sublimation of the desire at work in the passion contained in art. Bowie, while delineating these related aspects of Freud's work, draws our attention to the sheer stature of his writing as well as his thought.

André Green too, insists upon Freud's unassailable position in the western tradition. In Green's contribution, the only one to mention an explicitly national dimension, he touches upon the divergent traditions of British and French psychoanalysis, and their different conceptualizations of their common work. In outlining his own roots and those of French psychoanalysis more generally, he insists upon the continuing importance of a close reading of Freud. He identifies the perspective of observation, with its singling out of the model of mother and baby and its location in a psychological, developmental model, as one factor that has contributed to the diminishing commitment to the dimensions of the Freudian project, with its insistence upon the exploration of the particularity of psychical processes. This search for an empirical, testable basis for analytic work now threatens to render tamed and domesticated the revolutionary aspects of the Freudian metapsychology with their emphasis on the intractability of the unconscious.

Green ascribes to Donald Winnicott a major responsibility for producing work that has enhanced and developed the revolutionary thinking of Freud. In discussing some specific aspects of contemporary psychoanalytic technique and their theoretical bases, he questions current accounts of transference and the technical implications that follow from confining the interpretation of psychical processes to the dynamics of the relationship between analyst and analysand. He criticizes the slippage between the experience of being with a patient and the narrativization of that experience which forms the basis of many clinical papers. Green argues that scholarly exposition should be a sort of clinical collage, rather than the allegedly direct description of the words of a session. The status of verbatim reports of clinical sessions and the epistemological problems that surround such an enterprise have attracted increasing attention in the theoretical pages of the clinical journals, not least in the *International Journal*, but Green is here linking this to a more general debate on the way theory informs and shapes a clinical practice as it does any other.

Dominique Scarfone, like André Green, is interested in differences in the

mind of the neurotic patient, and that of the more disturbed, and the seriously ill patient. Scarfone, through a theoretical elaboration of the differential status of conflict in neurosis and psychosis proposes an account of the differing dynamics that could characterize the minds of the patients encountered in contemporary analytic work. He argues for the essential place of conflict internal to the mind, as established by the second Freudian model and further developed by Laplanche in the direction of his work since *The Language of Psychoanalysis* (1973) and *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis* (1976).[3] Scarfone shows how the capacity to withstand, and even more to make active use of the inevitable conflictuality of the psychic apparatus, is the strength of the reasonably healthy individual. For the psychotic, however, that normal, essential conflict is what cannot be entertained; it threatens dissolution and annihilation. Both Scarfone and Green emphasize Freud's work of the 1920s as continuingly relevant for our understanding of how the mind works and how early, in terms of emotional and environmental experience and its internal synthesis, is the laying down of the traces which contribute to psychic anguish.

3. J. Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, Hogarth Press, London 1973: J. Laplanche, *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1976.

In these contributions, the clinical practice of psychoanalysis and its implications are linked to the Freudian metapsychology and its later extensions. There is no question here of Freud's failure; instead, there is an insistence on the value of drawing upon his insights in extending contemporary knowledge about the mind and about the patients of the late twentieth century.

The importance of Winnicott is acknowledged by both these analysts of the French tradition, an importance that is attested in many of the papers collected here. But we are also fortunate in reproducing a paper by Winnicott himself, one which has not received wide publication, but whose formativeness for these accounts is clear. 'The Psychology of Madness: a Contribution from Psychoanalysis', offers a continuation of Freud's investigation of the mental apparatus and its origins and structuration in early infancy. It is developed through Winnicott's thinking about the clinical experience of fears of madness, and of breakdown and catastrophe, so regularly found in patients. Read in 1965 to the British Psychoanalytical Society, this paper explores the same terrain as his more famous paper, 'Fear of Breakdown'.[4] Both offer a contribution to the theory of madness as it is experienced clinically. Winnicott suggests that the normality of the oedipal period is a normality distinguished by the transient presence of every kind of manifestation that later would be regarded as pathological. In describing the psychoneuroses as belonging to the individual who has already formed a more or less reliable personality structure, he emphasizes the origins of psychosis in the infant's period of 'absolute dependence'. He suggests that there may be some universal experience of madness, cautiously adding 'whatever that means'. This forms the basis for his general point that, broadly speaking, human beings may be thought of as divided between those who have, and those who have not, to carry around with them an infantile experience of mental breakdown. Clinically, Winnicott proposes, this could be of enormous assistance to analysts in recognizing that

4. *International Review of Psychoanalysis*, Volume 1, pp103-107.

the fear of madness anticipated is a fear of madness already encountered. In describing this clinically resonant fact, he offers a further elaboration of stages in mental development, aligning them with Freud's insights about repeating and remembering. It is not remembering that is possible here, since what would be remembered precedes the existence of a mental apparatus capable of such activity; the nearest to remembering would be a reliving of that experience, above all in the analytic situation. But Winnicott also questions this formulation of his, that madness feared is madness already experienced, by referring both to the social meanings and consequences of real madness, and to the place of the defences in disallowing the experience that may have threatened in that very early moment.

Jim Hopkins is also concerned with the clinical situation and its efficacy. Writing from within the tradition of analytic philosophy, he argues for demonstrable similarities between analytic interpretation and commonsense explanations of actions, of motives, and of mental states. Hopkins is one of the defenders of Freud in the recent spate of attacks on his scientificity and here he uses Wittgenstein to establish his case for the possibility of the testing and confirmation of psychoanalytic hypotheses and the workability of analytic interpretation.

An emphasis on individual creativity, in both an ordinary way, as the necessary achievement of all, as well as in the extraordinary way of the artist, is also a distinctive contribution of Winnicott's. These two divergent but related directions are the same two directions that Bowie identifies in *Civilization and its Discontents*. The discussion of the place of art and the art object has existed in psychoanalytically informed criticism from Freud on. It is now a consistent thread in cultural theory, especially in the approach to literary and visual texts. The engagement of psychoanalysis with the cultural artefact produces emphases ranging from the application of general schemas, to the specific study of one art form rather than another, to the psychopathology of the artist, and to the responses of the reader. Decisions about how these areas are to be combined, what is to become the object of investigation and with which tools of investigation this object is to be examined, are all there in the writings of the past century, along with a consistent attention to art as the exemplification of universal themes, whether of the oedipus complex, of perversity, or of reparation and mourning. Claire Pajacowska outlines a set of general approaches that distinguish current interest in psychoanalysis and art using Freud's analogy of art with hysteria as the way into her own interest in the common terrain inhabited by descriptions of the sublime, some religious experience, and the allocation of maternal and paternal functions to cultural worlds. She touches briefly upon the alternative visions of the human being that manifest themselves in the dominant British accounts of the psychological dimensions of art and their own evolution from Freud's discussions of art and sublimation. Alex Tarnopolsky and Christopher Wintle take up slightly different emphases in their papers on *Rigoletto*. Informed by a Kleinian perspective, Tarnopolsky reads *Rigoletto* and its shocking narrative through the

life events of Verdi's life and his assumed capacity to overcome his own mourning through the composition of this opera and its capacity to embody excessively and painfully the unspeakable emotions of family passion. While Tarnopolsky makes use of psychoanalysis in elucidating the links between the life of Verdi and the plot of *Rigoletto*, Christopher Wintle identifies Rigoletto's drunkenness, a feature not present in Verdi and Piave's original conception, but introduced by Ponnelle in his filmed version of the opera, as the starting point for his own exploration of the psychological dimensions of the plot and the support given by the music to the incestuous themes which organize the unconscious dynamics between father and daughter and which lead, finally, to the death of Gilda.

The opening panel of the Freud Museum conference devoted to the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the publication of *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*[5] proved to be the occasion for a general revaluation of the different ways any ongoing relationship between the book's two terms could now be understood. Sexual difference, sexuality and feminism's insistence on their centrality has provided one foundation for much contemporary cultural theorizing. So accustomed are we to it that the novelty of the work of the 1970s in making available this central and distinctive orientation, first within feminism, then in cultural criticism and eventually in the returning of its specifically psychoanalytic imprint to psychoanalysis itself, now seems hard to credit. The contributions reproduced here, together with Ann Scott's introduction, describe the personal shifts brought about by an engagement, initially derived from the recognition of an absence, in the feminism of the time, of an attention to the unconscious and to internal states. The significance of Freud's work on sexuality for any discussion of male-female relations and the decision to pursue an interest then widely regarded as contentious, was converted into specific work choices for these women. This panel consists of individual accounts emphasizing the impact of their involvement in both feminism and psychoanalysis on the speakers' lives. As an evocative and moving set of personal statements, rather than a sustained engagement either with that initial theoretical work, or with the variety of paths it has followed in the past twenty years, they testify to the constellation of individual and collective issues that, taken together, have constituted the terrain of life choices for one particular group of women, through the way an initial political commitment to feminism led to related decisions about ways of living and working.

5. J. Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, Penguin, Harmondsworth 1974.

These issues are returned to theoretically in Wendy Harrison's review of Birksted-Breen's book, *The Gender Conundrum*.[6] The collection gathers together a series of clinical papers from different decades and is itself a species of clinical response to the intellectual, cultural and institutional effects of these same recent histories. Speaking from within the academy, as a feminist consistently engaged in theoretical exploration of these debates and their implications, Harrison is as critical of the orientation of many of the papers in the collection as she is of Breen's own introduction. For her, these analytic papers

6. D. Birksted-Breen, *The Gender Conundrum*, Library of Psychoanalysis, 18, Routledge, London 1993.

demonstrate the normative implications of what she regards as an unquestioned biologism that provides the basis of many contemporary psychoanalytic accounts and their clinical emphases. She argues for a re-interrogation of the epistemological foundations of such approaches and the assessments to which they give rise. In these analytic essays, a more empirical, developmental tradition is present in the Anglo-American work, while a rather different conception is evident in the essays deriving from the French tradition. The book draws together clinical papers on a theme which is often seen as a major theme of Freud's own work, his insistence on the difference between the sexes as central to the organization of our psychical and emotional life. It is an area which has tended to diminish in clinical importance since the debates of the 1920s and 1930s, but these papers reveal that, although the issue of sexuality had given way to a more attenuated set of issues in the arena of clinical practice, as a theme it certainly did not disappear. The shift in the clinical emphases of the English school, in the shape of Klein, Fairbairn and Winnicott, and through ego psychology and self psychology, has clearly developed a framework whose emphases are different from the classical Freudian account. The book is an endorsement of the significant effect that feminism has exerted in revitalizing the debates, and the wider availability of these papers that the collection makes possible is to be welcomed.

For those cultural theorists who have emphasized the inescapability of Freud, he is often identified as shaping the representation of the modern world and as suggestive of ways of continuing to think about it. In discussing *The Three Essays*, Steven Marcus has described it as generating 'the most exceptional consequences upon our conceptions of personal life, childhood and human development', adding that 'no work of its kind or scope is more important for the understanding of how modernity, or the generally recognized modern point of view came into being or was brought about.'[7] Although the psychoanalytic perspective – and it certainly cannot be assumed that what this is is self-evident – appears to have become a dominant one in a wide spectrum of academic work, it is by no means clear that the sheer extent of this approach sustains those characteristics that the scope of psychoanalysis itself potentially offers.

7. Steven Marcus, *Freud and the Culture of Psychoanalysis*, W.W. Norton & Co, New York 1984.

As the opening presentation of a joint Latin American-French meeting, convened by René Major in Paris, in 1981, Derrida's 'Geopsychoanalysis: ... and the rest of the world' proposes a challenging reading of a set of documents of the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA); these are congress reports, statements and positions which are part either of debate about a formal declaration on human rights issued by the IPA, and/or about the provisions of the new constitution. The exchanges he discusses occurred between the IPA congresses held in Jerusalem in 1977, in New York in 1979, and in Helsinki in 1981. Derrida highlights some aspects of a discussion about the vote on the new IPA constitution that would be taken in Helsinki and links it with the IPA's failure to confront the specificity of the human rights issue in Argentina. The decision to issue a general statement expressing opposition to the abuse of psychiatric or

psychoanalytic methods, and to the violation of human rights in any way, in any country, was preferred, rather than a specific statement on the situation in Argentina. This was more significant than the retreat to an understandable neutrality would suggest. As a country where a strong psychoanalytic movement existed side by side with an extensively documented regime of systematic torture of its citizens, the decision not to identify Argentina, Derrida proposes, signified, among other things, a general failure to understand that the body of psychoanalytic thought might have something specific to address to the discourse of human rights, and to that of torture. The decision to fall back upon the widely acknowledged inadequacies of a generalist account of human rights, uninflected by psychoanalytic insight, was ominous. Derrida says that despite the frequency of references to 'psychoanalysis and politics' in the period from the late 1960s on, 'no code of political or ethical discourse (using discourse as ethico-political action or as behaviour) has incorporated an axiomatics of psychoanalysis'. He insists that the less these different theoretical approaches are integrated, the wider a space is opened up for the appropriation of the one by the other, in the most overtly manipulative of ways. One obvious consequence is the complete dissociation of the psychoanalytical sphere from the life, public or private, of citizens. The retreat to neutrality that is evident in the statement about violations is not primarily disputed for its inadequate account of rights, but for its completely non-psychoanalytical nature. Derrida argues for an encounter between psychoanalytical conceptions of the value of the person, and the philosophical tradition, with Plato, with Kant, with Marx, with Heidegger. He does this on grounds which, he insists, are as much to do with the inevitability of psychoanalysis in the contemporary world, as they are of the urgency of political and juridical aspects of the rights issue. Psychoanalysis should have a specific contribution to make to discussion about torture and about violence, it should participate in any ongoing research, and its perceived failure to do so, for him, is to be seen as symptomatic of its contemporary theoretical, practical and institutional situation. His is a critique from a position of passionate recognition of the challenge offered to the conditions of the modern world by the Freudian discoveries. There is no agreement here with the more recent challenges which have aimed at reversing those features of the modern world which give it its indelibly different ethos. The IPA's 1981 failure is, for Derrida, the sign of its own internal crisis, a crisis that is currently extending and which is urgently in need of an attention that will permit the revival of the revolutionary potential of psychoanalysis through a difficult but necessary interrogation of its own structures and practices, its own decisions about legitimating codes and its continuing place in the postmodern world. His article appears as relevant today as it did then.

Lesley Caldwell
June 1995.