

No Pearls before Swine: This therapist seems to be playing a clinical version of "Rickshaw:" "If only you weren't sick, treatment would sure go easier." Having a distinct preference for the "analytic candidate" (that is, a patient whose stream of consciousness sounds very much like Fenichel's), he becomes openly vexed with patients who "cannot produce meaningful material," "are not in treatment," or, (and this borders on attributing sin to the patient), "are not willing to think about their problems."

All of these games, or sub-games, are two-handed; the partner-to-be is both the patient and the supervisor. (Three-handed games exist, of course, as in "But I did what you said.") Vis-a-vis the patient, they seem to be variants of ITHY, IWFY, and "Look How Hard I've Tried." Vis-a-vis the supervisor, they are spin-offs from "Kick Me," GYWP, and "Ain't it Awful." Their economy should be duly applauded: one transaction serves as the opening move for both patient and supervisor.

Transactionally, the therapist's message is either Parent (angry, disciplining) to Child, or Child (angry and rebellious) to Parent. Whichever, the therapist is re-enacting a portion of the protocol by casting the patient in the role of some significant other, commonly one of the parents, but not infrequently, a sib.

Therefore, I have found the following intervention the most efficient: "Does this patient remind you of somebody important?" Note that this intervention calls only for a yes-no answer; this not only respects the student's privacy, but it also prevents the two of you from slipping off into a game of "Archaeology" or "Therapy Supervision-Psychoanalytic Type," both of which are a waste of time and quite boring.

FREUD ON THE "GALLOWS TRANSACTION"

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Steiner (*TAB* 6:38-39) has called attention to the *gallows transaction* which occurs, for example, during alcoholic pastimes. White tells of last week's bender to the delight of every Child in the room. The smile of the witch mother (or ogre) marks the pleasure of the teller's Parent (P_1) in the Child at his execution of her injunction. Humor in the group reinforces it and tightens the noose around White's neck.

Freud in 1928 published a short sequel to his work on *Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious* entitled "Humour." (*Collected Papers* 5:215-221). His prime illustration is the humor of a criminal, being led to the gallows

on Monday, quipping, "Well, this is a good beginning to the week." In essence, the criminal's humor is to spare himself the affect to which the situation gives rise. For Freud, such jest had two liberating elements: 1) a denial of the claim of reality in which the narcissistic ego asserts its invulnerability, impervious to wounds dealt by the outside world, and 2) a triumph of the pleasure principle which rebelliously asserts itself in the face of adverse, real circumstances. In his work on wit, Freud described a humorous attitude toward others as assuming the superior role of the grown-up, reducing other people to the position of children. Here he suggests the criminal is actually treating himself like a child while, at the same time, playing the part of the superior adult in relation to this child.

Humor, for Freud, was a contribution of the superego, in contrast to wit which originated in momentary abandonment of conscious thought to elaboration by unconscious, primary process thinking. The superego, in this respect, became the inheritor of the parental function. It still treated the ego as the parents treated the child in early years. In the case of the criminal, it was the superego that spoke such kindly words of comfort to the intimidated ego: "See here, this seemingly dangerous world amounts to nothing but child's play."

Steiner sees the humor of the "witch laugh" as Parental pleasure in the Child successfully executing his self-destructive injunction. Freud saw the humor of the gallows joke as an internal transaction involving a nurturing superego taking care of an intimidated child. In Script Psychology, both the destructiveness of mother's "crazy Child" and her comforting nurture are joined in the *gallow transaction*. Crossman (TAB 5:152-154) has described the conditions that may be affixed as mother responds to the child's first, primitive request, "Protect me." Our criminal did not have the kind of mother who responded, "I'll protect you — provided you smile back at me." Instead, mother probably suggested, "I'll care for you so long as you play 'it's fun to get hung.'" Freud sensed the continuing parental care disguised by humor. Not having distinguished separate ego states, he attributed this nurturing and preoedipal function to the superego, an agency normally reserved for censoring with all the punitive weight of castration. And he pointed out we have much more to learn about it. This precise combination of destructiveness and nurture accounts for the life and death quality in all tragic scripts. Abandonment of the script involves the deeper, preoedipal fear of desertion and primitive death which causes the patient's Child to constantly strive to keep the Parent around, even if he kills himself.

The distinguishing mark of humor in the *gallows transaction* is *it isn't funny*. Some clinical examples:

1. Mrs. A in process of divorce: "My husband never did anything (hehehe) . . . , he left me without money for the house payments

(hehehe) . . . , my lawyers won't help me at all (hehehe)." A "you-sentence" revealed the injunction: "you never get treated as a person." Mother abandoned Mrs. A to an orphanage at the age of two and steadily ignored efforts to contact her in later life.

2. Mrs. B who divorced her first husband when he "went psychotic," lost her next husband-to-be through death, and has an affair while her third, faithful husband is away: "I'm very insecure . . . , I'm sure everything will 'dump on me' . . . , I guess (hahaha) I'll just end up a lonely old lady." Both mother and grandmother are lonely old ladies and her father left by divorce when she was five.

3. Mr. C, a competitive tennis player who tends to "choke" and double-fault in tournament play, just when he is ahead: "It started in the finals of the state . . . I served two aces and then (smile) came three straight double faults." A remembered maternal saying: "Pride cometh before a fall." His father showed him how to be great and then fall.

THE GAME OF "NOBODY UNDERSTANDS ME"

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Through several years of experience in group therapy with inpatient alcoholics, the author has become impressed with the widespread tendency of the alcoholic to take the attitude that no one, except possibly another alcoholic, can ever begin to understand him. This common and persistent tendency has many of the characteristics of a game as defined by Berne.

Alcoholics have been so successful in this game that many treatment programs have adopted the policy of hiring ex-alcoholics or "dry alcoholics" as counselors. Many wives of alcoholics have joined Alanon clubs, and many teen-agers have joined Alateen clubs, all in the effort to understand better the poor, misunderstood alcoholic.

The game of "Nobody Understands Me" (NUM) can be played by almost any number of players. Individual play manifests itself in marriage and in individual psychotherapy. An alcoholic who is a skilled player of NUM has little difficulty in convincing his wife that because of her lack of understanding of him she is at least 50 per cent responsible for his alcoholism. In individual psychotherapy it is the therapist's failure to show adequate understanding that can become the rationalization for continued alcoholism, particularly if the therapist is practicing a type of therapy that stresses insight.

At least a few players of NUM can readily switch to what is more or less the antithesis of NUM, which is the game of "Only You Understand Me" (OYUM). The game of OYUM is not apt to be played with the spouse, at