Sigmund Freud envisioned psychoanalysis as a discipline devoted to the study of the human condition, grounded in the clinical realities of the analytic situation but inspired by the wisdom of the poets. He attracted colleagues from diverse backgrounds, individuals of culture and curiosity who were moved by his mission to illuminate the dark at the center of the psyche. The range of their collective interests and the enthusiastic spirit of discovery that animated their approach to psychoanalysis transformed a narrow clinical specialty into an expanding science of human nature. The intellectual character of the pioneering analysts was born of a broad erudition and a tradition of scholarship in the arts and sciences. This tradition, so alien to the technocratic ethos of our time, has been preserved and continued in the work of Martin S. Bergmann.

Martin Bergmann is a scholar of unusual accomplishment, a master of the humanities and a revered sage of psychoanalysis. He is responsible for more than forty scholarly papers and four volumes, and his favorite topics span an impressive range of subjects. His writings are distinctive, notable for their depth and originality, and for the historical perspective within which their themes are developed. Esteemed and respected as a scholar, Martin Bergmann is warmly and enthusiastically treasured as a teacher of psychoanalysis. His private seminars, conducted in his dining room, are a venerable institution in the psychoanalytic community of New York City. “Martin Bergmann may well be the most popular teacher of private seminars on psychoanalysis ever,” wrote Arlene Richards (1994, p. 3).

Martin Bergmann was born in Prague in 1913, the scion of a highly cultured and intellectual family. His father, Hugo Bergmann (1883-1975), was a distinguished philosopher, one of the outstanding students of Franz Brentano (1838-1917). (Brentano, the author of the influential Psychology From an Empirical Standpoint, is best known to psychoanalysts as Freud’s professor of philosophy at the University of Vienna.) Among his close personal friends were Franz Kafka and Martin Buber, after whom Martin was named. Despite his estimable accomplishments as a philosopher, Hugo Bergmann’s efforts to obtain an academic post at the University of Prague were barred by an entrenched anti-Semitism. Like Freud before him, the senior Bergmann refused to convert to Christianity in order to circumvent this block, electing instead to work as an independent scholar, and earning his living as a university librarian. In 1920, the family emigrated to Palestine, where Hugo Bergmann became a professor of philosophy at the Hebrew University, eventually winning the unique distinction of being elected its first rector (Mendes-Flohr, 1994).

While Hugo Bergmann became an increasingly important figure in Jewish intellectual life, his son Martin gravitated toward life on the kibbutz, where he became interested in
progressive education. He was particularly intrigued by a book authored by Siegfried Bernfeld (1921) on the application of psychoanalytic principles to the problem of educating children orphaned by war. His interests gradually turned to psychology. In 1934 Martin Bergmann immigrated to the United States where he earned a degree in the fledgeling field of clinical psychology. During the second world war, he served as an army psychologist, where his experience conducting diagnostic testing and hypnotic therapy with traumatized veterans became the basis for his first publications (Bergmann, 1945; Bergmann and Goldman, 1945; Bergmann and Eisendorfer, 1945; Bergmann, Leavitt, and Graham, 1947; Bergmann and Leavitt, 1947).

With the conclusion of the war, Bergmann took a position as chief psychologist with Lewis Wolberg, at Wolberg’s nascent Postgraduate Center for Mental Health, then a clinic specializing in the treatment of returning war veterans. For Bergmann, the satisfactions of diagnostic testing paled before his growing fascination with psychoanalysis, a profession from which social workers and psychologists were then excluded. Undeterred by the closed doors of psychoanalytic officialdom, Bergmann arranged for his own “unauthorized training.” He entered analysis with Edith Jacobson and joined study groups led by Paul Federn and Theodor Reik, and later, Robert Waelder. All four had been highly distinguished members of the European psychoanalytic community before the war, and all brought to psychoanalysis the enthusiasm and breadth of interests that so distinguished the vibrant intellectual culture of that milieu.

Edith Jacobson (1897-1978) was a medical doctor, a musician, and a training analyst at the Berlin Institute. A woman of extraordinary character and courage, Jacobson served in the anti-Nazi underground resistance, choosing to remain in Germany when other Jews fled. In 1935, she was arrested by the Gestapo and sentenced to prison. Two years later she escaped and made her way to New York, where she became a leading figure at New York Psychoanalytic Institute, making important contributions to the emerging ego psychology (Kronold, 1980; Brecht, 1988).

Of his three teachers, Paul Federn (1871-1950) was the oldest, a member of Freud’s original circle since 1904. Federn had been a prominent teacher and training analyst at the Vienna Society. In 1924 he was appointed by Freud, then ailing with cancer, to serve as his deputy and personal representative at the Society. Elected to the office of Vice President later that year, Federn served as Acting President in Freud’s absence until the society was dissolved in 1938. Federn is best known for his pioneering work in the psychoanalytic treatment of psychotic patients, and his innovative approach to the study of the ego and its states. Although he was a medical doctor himself, he was vigorous proponent of lay analysis, a fact which alienated his colleagues in the American psychoanalytic establishment (Federn, 1997; Bergmann, 1963; Weiss, 1951, 1966)

Theodor Reik (1888-1969), a Viennese psychologist, joined the Vienna society in 1911 and became a close protege of Freud and an instructor at the training institute. Reik was the subject of the famous lawsuit which inspired Freud’s monograph in support of lay analysis (Freud, 1926). A prolific author, steeped in the arts and humanities, Reik is remembered for his many contributions to applied psychoanalysis and for his controversial emphasis on the importance of intuition and surprise in clinical psychoanalysis (Natterson, 1966; Bergmann, 1968, 1976b, 1988c).
Robert Waelder (1900-1967) a Viennese physicist turned analyst, was an instructor at the Vienna Institute and a member of the last circle that met in Freud’s home during the 1930’s. Waelder, who was interested in the arts, archaeology, socio-political theory, and history, was co-editor with Ernst Kris of Imago, the journal of applied psychoanalysis. His many contributions include numerous psychoanalytic papers pertaining to social and political theory, an oft-cited analysis of the six levels of theory in psychoanalysis (1962), and, of course, his famous paper on “the principle of multiple function” (Waelder, 1930; see also, Bergmann, 1988c; Guttman, 1969).

Each of his three teachers, Bergmann recalls, influenced him in a different way. He was fascinated by Federn’s conviction that psychotic patients will tell their analyst how to cure them if the analyst listens with an open mind. Reik stimulated his interest in applied psychoanalysis, especially in regard to mythology and culture. Bergmann remembers Waelder, with whom Bergmann began studying after Federn’s death, as the most skeptical and objective of his teachers. In contrast to Federn, whom Bergmann characterizes as an ardent Freudian (an impression echoed by Esther Menaker [1989]), Waelder encouraged a critical attitude toward received theory and urged its assessment by reference to empirical data. To those who know him, these reminiscences will evoke the image of Martin Bergmann himself.

Bergmann’s teaching career was launched in 1952, when he was invited to lead a seminar on dream analysis at the newly established National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis. The institute, headed by Theodor Reik, who had been denied membership at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute, was the first to offer psychoanalytic training to social workers and psychologists. In a toast offered on the occasion of Martin Bergmann’s eighty-fifth birthday, Dr. Ruth Lax, a New York psychoanalyst and a member of that first class, recalled the enthusiasm and insights that Bergmann brought to his students. Excited by his scholarly pedagogy, the class asked him to continue teaching the seminar privately. Thus began the first of the legendary Bergmann seminars. Although he continued to teach at various institutes around the city for many years, Bergmann’s life as a teacher of psychoanalysis soon came to center in the dining room of his Manhattan apartment, where he has been conducting five different weekly seminars for the past four decades. Over these years, the Bergmann seminars nurtured the professional development of generations of New York analysts. The unique character of the Bergmann seminars has been wonderfully depicted in an evocative tribute by Munter and Pekowsky (1994).

Although the Bergmann seminars have been home to a wide spectrum of New York analysts, they have been uniquely important for non-medical analysts. For “lay analysts,” the Bergmann seminars were a special haven, providing a unique context, not only for learning, but for the consolidation of their psychoanalytic identities. By his teaching and by his example, Martin Bergmann inspired and educated a growing community of non-medical analysts, and thus helped lay the groundwork for their eventual recognition by the psychoanalytic establishment. The importance of Bergmann’s role in the legitimization of lay analysis can only be understood by recalling the historical
circumstances of psychoanalysis in the United States at the time Bergmann entered the field. The magnitude of the changes that have occurred since that time are breathtaking. It is notable that in the decade that has elapsed since his paper on “lay analysis” (Bergmann, 1988c) the term has virtually vanished from our discourse.

Martin Bergmann’s contributions to psychoanalysis have been widely appreciated, not only by non-medical analysts, but throughout the psychoanalytic community. In 1991, Bergmann was invited to present the plenary address at the Fall Meeting of the American Psychoanalytic Association (Bergmann, 1993a), an event which marked not only a recognition of his personal accomplishments but signalled the magnitude of the changes underway within psychoanalysis. Several years later, in honor of his eightieth birthday, he was honored with an exceptional festschrift, The Spectrum of Psychoanalysis (Richards and Richards, 1994). In 1997, Bergmann was awarded the Sigourney Prize for his outstanding contributions to psychoanalysis, and the following year was afforded the very rare distinction of being elected an Honorary Member of the American Psychoanalytic Association.

Martin Bergmann’s many contributions to the literature of psychoanalysis can readily be sorted into five groups, each devoted to a central theme. These include his contributions to the psychoanalytic theory of love (1971, 1976c, 1980, 1982a, 1984, 1986, 1987, 1988a, 1995a) the psychoanalytic understanding of mythology (Bergmann, 1953, 1966a, 1988d, 1992), psychoanalysis and the Holocaust (Bergmann and Jucovy, 1982a, 1982b; Bergmann 1982a, 1983, 1985, 1995b), the practice of clinical psychoanalysis (1966b, 1968, 1986, 1988, 1993b, 1993c, 1994, 1997b, 1997c), and finally, the course of psychoanalytic history (Bergmann, 1963, 1973, 1975a, 1975b, 1976a, 1976b, 1988c, 1989, 1990, 1993a, 1993d, 1996, 1997a; Bergmann and Hartmann, 1976). Bergmann’s contributions each of these areas are discussed in the next five sections of this paper. I conclude with a discussion of Bergmann’s work as a whole, in which I attempt to describe some of the ideas and basic concerns that unify the body of his work.

On the Psychoanalytic Theory of Love

Love may well be the most mysterious and compelling of all our emotions, and our need to express it, to describe it, and to understand has left its imprint upon the poetry, drama, and literature of all human civilizations. It was only with the work of Freud that love became a subject of sustained scientific inquiry. Bergmann’s interest in the psychoanalytic theory of love was first piqued by Margaret Mahler, whose studies of preodipal development suggested to him a corresponding addition to the traditional Freudian view of love as a derivative of the oedipus complex. His 1971 paper on this theme, “Psychoanalytic Observations on the Capacity to Love,” was the first in a series of studies on the subject of love.

In his book, The Anatomy of Loving (1987), Bergmann examined the world’s literature and mythology to discover how love was experienced and understood by our forbears. Bergmann found the world’s first known expressions of love in the poetry of the Ancient Egyptians, in which love was described as a “a sickness that only the beloved can cure.”
The marvelous pithiness of this definition inspires comparison with Schopenhauer’s
definition of love as a “longing that closely associates the notion of an endless bliss with
the possession of a definite woman, and an unutterable pain with the thought that this
possession is not attainable” (Bergmann, 1987, p. 132). Love was so central to the Greeks
that they established gods whose sole concern was love. To the Greeks, falling in love
was a passion imposed by the arbitrary whims of Aphrodite or the mischievous arrows of
Cupid. They did not see love as a relationship between unique individuals, nor did they
link falling in love to any notion of abiding love.

Plato made two important contributions to an emerging understanding of love, Bergmann
writes, both of which were central to Freud’s later views. The first of Plato’s
contributions is the myth of the double people, which explains the origins of love.
According to this story, related by Aristophanes in the Symposium, our ancient
predecessors were each made up of two persons. Threatened by their power, Zeus cut
them all in half, leaving everyone incomplete and yearning to refind his or her other half.
Later in the Symposium, Diotima argues that love of physical beauty can be transformed
through successive steps on a metaphorical ladder of love, into a love of wisdom and of
abstract virtues. Both these ideas, love as refinding and the sublimation of desire, would
feature prominently in psychoanalytic theory.

Sigmund Freud was able to surpass the achievements of the artists and philosophers who
preceded him, Bergmann (1971) wrote, because he possessed three important tools
which they lacked. First, when Freud came to address the mysteries of romantic love, he
possessed a genetic psychology which he had previously developed in his work on the
neuroses. This allowed him to recognize that the many forms of love which he observed
were related to each other, and that they shared common roots in childhood experience.
Second, Freud possessed a research method, clinical psychoanalysis, well suited for the
investigation of love. Third, he had access to a rich source of raw data in the phenomena
of transference love. Freud’s insights into the nature and genesis of love were
revolutionary, but he did not produce a comprehensive theory of love. When Bergmann
gathered the scattered fragments of Freud’s writings on love, he found that Freud had
actually developed three different theories of love (Bergmann, 1971, 1980, 1982a, 1986,

Freud’s first theory of love is contained in his Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality
(1905a) and in two ensuing papers (1910, 1912). This is the familiar theory of love as
“refinding,” which Bergmann regards as Freud’s greatest contribution to the
understanding of love. According to this view, love is an act of refinding because the
beloved unconsciously represents the oedipal parent. Love is inherently conflictual
because it must evoke the image of the parent to generate passion, but this link must
remain unconscious lest sexuality be inhibited by the incest taboo. Happy love evokes the
parent without triggering the incest taboo.

Freud’s second theory of love is contained in the paper on narcissism (Freud, 1914a). To
the earlier idea that love refinds the oedipal parent, Freud added that the beloved may
also represent an idealized aspect of the self. Such love restores a state of perfection by uniting the lover with his or her ideal self.

Bergmann (1980) found Freud’s third theory of love embedded in “Instincts and their Vicissitudes” (1915a). In that paper, Freud defined love as “an attitude of the ego” (i.e., of the self), determined by the role of the beloved in satisfying all one’s needs, not merely one’s sexual needs. This is a far more complex view of love than its theoretical predecessors. This theory, Bergmann observes, pertains more to abiding love than to the experience of falling in love. Freud’s third theory suggests that a mature ego is a prerequisite for love, since the creation of a loving attitude requires the integration of multiple impulses and affects, including hostile affects. Before the advent of ego psychology, however, Freud viewed this capacity as a natural concomitant of instinctual development. He therefore regarded genitality as a prerequisite to love, an idea popularized by Abraham (1924), Reich (1929), and Fenichel (1945), who mistakenly equated genital sexuality with genital love, a notion Bergmann, following Balint (1947), emphatically rejects.

In his paper on the “Intrapsychic Function of Falling in Love,” Bergmann (1980) demonstrates that Freud’s ideas about love were modeled on his topographic theory of dreams. Love is a transference of libido from a childhood figure onto a current figure, triggered when a current figure evokes the unconscious image of a primary love object. When the two images are condensed, love emerges like the manifest content of a dream. Sadly, love can also dissipate into air, like a “midsummer night’s dream,” on awakening. It is no wonder that Freud was so pessimistic about romantic love. From the topographic point of view, love is only a dream, an illusory revival of the past, construed to be real in the present, and destined to disappointment in the future. With the advent of the structural model, Bergmann observes, a more complex and potentially optimistic view of love became possible. He cites Waelder, the third of his teachers, who was the first analyst to recognize that happy love is more than refinding. In his paper on the principle of multiple function, Waelder viewed love as an ideal compromise formation between id, ego, superego, and the repetition compulsion (Waelder, 1930). Waelder’s perspective held the promise of a more sophisticated theory of love, but the potential went unfulfilled until the 1970’s, Bergmann (1987) writes, when new discoveries about childhood development inspired a fresh round of theorizing about love. Bergmann was one of the first to contribute to the development of a new understanding in which preoedipal determinants were incorporated within a structural model of love (Bergmann, 1971).

Bergmann’s contributions to the theory of love constitute a significant addition to the traditional Freudian model. Not only has Bergmann extended the theory to include preoedipal experience, he has emphasized the importance of postoedipal life and the creative use of symbolic processes in the creation of love relationships that go beyond repetitive refindings. Briefly stated, these are the hallmarks of Bergmann’s position: Our need for love, he writes, is rooted in the essential character of the human design. Bergmann concurs with Ferenczi that man has no will to enter the world without the welcoming embrace of his mother (Ferenczi, 1929), a position for which Bergmann finds support in Spitz’s (1945) discoveries about the fate of Ferenczi’s “unwelcome child.”
Bergmann interprets Spitz’s findings on hospitalism as confirming the existence of a death instinct that must be tempered by a favorable balance of libido. This libido, this love, must come from the world.

The primal origins of the capacity to love lie in the symbiotic relation to the mother. Symbiosis is the subjective source of yearnings for “oneness,” a state which may be partially “refound” in the state of blissful love. The capacity to enjoy this refound “oneness” in adult love is not assured, however, by a happy symbiosis in childhood. Success in separation-individuation is a prerequisite for happy oneness, and derailments in the separation process leave the state of “oneness” entangled in primitive anxieties about engulfment and invasion that undermine the capacity to love as an adult. Successful separation-individuation, however, is only the first of the prerequisites for a capacity to love.

The prolonged helplessness of childhood entails innumerable experiences of emotional and bodily satisfactions which give rise to feelings of tender love as well as sensual pleasure, and which eventuates in the passions of oedipal love and the ensuing oedipal conflicts with which all psychoanalysts are familiar. In his volume on the origins of Western religion (1992), Bergmann adds the disturbing observation that the aggression of the oedipal child corresponds to hostilities originating in the parent. An excess of parental hostility complicates the Oedipal conflicts the child will need to surmount in order to love as an adult.

While the Oedipus complex entails emotional perils, it is also a prerequisite for the capacity to love. The Oedipus complex must be transformed, Bergmann writes, but it must not be dissolved. The concept of the dissolution of the Oedipus complex (Freud, 1924) is not only inconsistent with Freud’s views about the indestructibility of wishes, it runs contrary to the theory of love as refinding. If the dissolution of the oedipus complex were possible, the child would be left with no object to find. A related discovery is that multiple caretakers undermine the potential for adult love. If childhood love is splintered, the adult will be left with too many objects to find, none individually carrying the emotional significance to satisfy. The refinding of multiple persons in the single figure of the beloved is possible, but this requires a great deal of integrative activity of which not everyone is capable (Bergmann, 1987).

Refinding is relatively uncomplicated when there is a well-loved prototype. When early object relations are painful or disappointing, however, refinding repeats destructive relationships. In his 1971 paper, Bergmann proposed the new concept of “counter-refinding,” defined as a compulsive avoidance of persons like the original object. Counter-refinding averts the destructiveness of pathological refinding, but love based on counter-refinding inevitably lacks the passionate conviction of love for a figure refound, and it is likely to entail feelings of estrangement or bewilderment as to the choice of partner. Counter-refinding thus makes its first appearance in Bergmann’s writings as a problem, albeit the lesser of two evils.
In later work, however, Bergmann introduced a more positive version of counter-refinding (Bergmann, 1987). He observed that love can be based upon a fantasy of a new object who heals the wounds inflicted by parents. The healing object is someone who is sought to rescue one’s potential for happiness by providing emotional experiences, such as encouragement, optimism or mirroring, that were missing from primary relationships. The search for healing love is intrinsically hopeful, though it is prone to disappointment when hopes are too high. Still, the quest for healing love is progressive: it looks forward to a new future that is not a replication of the past. Although Bergmann is not explicit on this point, the concept of healing love should be differentiated from counter-refinding, because it is based on a search for something good, not merely an avoidance of something bad.

Healing love cannot provide a link to one’s infantile love objects, but it can revive a thwarted potential for feelings of satisfaction and intimacy. Healing love entails some mysteries, yet to be fully explored. How does the image of healing love come into existence if it is not based upon early experience? Although Bergmann has not elaborated upon this, his comments suggest that the origins of healing love must lie in at least two different zones of experience. First, the wish for healing love may be formed through the symbolic elaboration of bits and pieces of experience, including transitory moments of relatedness or gratification that are experienced either directly or vicariously through observation of gratifying love given to others. The second zone of experience is the interpersonal experiences of postoedipal or adult life. Bergmann observes that the vicissitudes of love in adult life may reorganize an individual’s conditions for loving (Bergmann, 1988b, p. 140). Emotional needs which are unmet in childhood can be belatedly satisfied in adulthood, he suggests, and such adult “experiences of satisfaction” can contribute to the evolution of new libidinal prototypes.

However preferable to pathological refinding, the search for a healing object complicates love. This divergence of desires for the familiar figures of childhood, on the one hand, and for a new healing object, on the other, places a difficult demand upon the ego’s capacity for integration, and any real love object may leave either of these two strivings unfulfilled. Freud’s classic formulation in his first theory of love, that is, that love is strained by the contradiction between the desire for the incestuous and the search for the non-incestuous, must be expanded to include the second fundamental contradiction in the dynamics of love. Love is strained by a conflict between the desire for a familiar but hurtful object, on the one hand, and the desire for a healing object on the other.

Love fulfills a series of intrapsychic functions. In a paper devoted to this topic, Bergmann (1980) identified four such functions. First, he wrote, the passion of love facilitates a transfer of libido from infantile imagoes in the unconscious, where gratification is not possible, to current, non-incestuous interpersonal relationships, where it is attainable. Second, love symbolically restores the lost object relations of childhood. Third, love restores a measure of symbiotic bliss. Fourth, love heals early injuries and deprivations. Elsewhere, Bergmann cites three other functions: As described above, love can restore narcissistic balance through the projection of the ego ideal onto the beloved (Freud, 1914a). In his 1987 volume, Bergmann endorsed Binstock’s (1973) idea that heterosexual
love can solidify gender identity by containing counter-gender identifications. In a recent paper on play, Bergmann (1993b) suggested that happy love can restore the childhood capacity to play, to link fantasy life with objective reality in the shared interpersonal realm of make-believe. All these functions naturally have their pathologies, but, within limits, each may also be a part of normal love.

Bergmann emphasizes the differences between falling in love and abiding love. One evokes the infantile, the other demands maturity. Falling in love may lead to abiding love, but, to paraphrase from another context, there is no royal road from one to the other. The complete trip requires the navigational expertise of an alert ego. Five ego functions are especially important. First, love requires reality testing to assess the real qualities of the beloved. Second, the ego must integrate representations of former love objects with the new object to effect a strong current of love. Third, the ego must counteract the force of the superego and protect the new love from the incest taboo. Fourth, the ego must mitigate the demands of the id which insists on complete gratification. Fifth, the ego must prevent pathological object choice by negotiating between the demands of refinding, on the one hand, and the urge to find a safe object, on the other (Bergmann, 1980, 1987).

In Bergmann’s view, love is a compromise formation, a complex integration of multiple wishes and object relations from every era of development, along with their attendant anxieties and defenses. There are thus many varieties of love, each formed by a different combination of ingredients and a different solution to the conflictual challenges they pose. All the curiosities of love, the strange rituals, props, perversions, and odd preconditions for loving, can be understood as expressions of the difficulties encountered in integrating these many ingredients. There is no pure love any more than there is pure perversion. All love entails contradictory emotional forces, and the integration of these forces, Bergmann writes, makes love much more than a simple refinding.

Psychoanalysis is the treatment of choice for the promotion of the individual’s capacity to love. In a classical analysis, the patient’s transference resurrects repressed love attached to archaic imagoes, which are then displaced onto the analyst. Of course, this process is conflictual: when love returns from repression, it is still caked in childhood conflict. The heart of analytic treatment is the interpretation of these conflicts and of their unconscious displacement onto the analyst. Freed from repression, freed from conflictual entanglements, and freed from attachment to the analyst, libido can once again seek objects in the real world. In this description, existing prototypes are the basis for refinding.

The clinical situation is more complicated, however, when existing prototypes are models for destructive repetition. In his analysis of this clinical problem, Bergmann (1982a) cites Freud’s differentiation between transference which is a “mere reprint” of an earlier relationship and transference which is a “revised edition.” This second type of transference revises an old prototype by combining it with new ingredients found in the relationship with the analyst (Freud, 1905b). It is transference as a “revised edition” which enables the patient to accept analytic relatedness, based on inquiry and
understanding, as a substitute for more primitive forms of gratification. In a traditional analysis, the analytic relationship is the necessary and sustaining context for analytic work, but it is the revival and illumination of infantile conflicts that is ultimately curative. Where functional prototypes for love are lacking, however, the experience of new interactional patterns within the analytic relationship may play a more central role in treatment. Here, the transference which revises may eventuate in a new relationship which satisfies, or perhaps, in a long sought love which heals. The experience of the analytic relationship may then become the basis for a new libidinal prototype.

If we compare Freud’s view of love with Bergmann’s view, we observe a dramatic shift of emphasis. Freud viewed love from the topographic point of view, which emphasizes the repetitive refinding of archaic prototypes. In Freud’s thinking, love relationships form a series, with the emphasis on repetition. For Bergmann, love relationships form a series, but the emphasis has shifted from repetition to the progressive creation of something new.

_Psychoanalytic Treatment of Holocaust Survivors and their Children_

Only a thinker who can enjoy the pleasures of contemplating love would be able to turn his attention to the topic of hate without losing heart. Bergmann has done this twice, in his studies on the Holocaust (Bergmann and Jucovy, 1982a, 1982b; Bergmann, 1982b, 1985, 1995b) and in his study of ritual infanticide and its relation to Western religion (discussed in the following section). In the 1970’s, Bergmann became co-chairman of a group devoted to studying the effects of the Holocaust on survivors and their children (Bergmann and Jucovy, 1982a). The study was inspired by the recognition that analysts treating Holocaust victims were avoiding exploration of material related to the Holocaust in their clinical work. This avoidance was due to anxiety over the horrifying content of Holocaust narratives, Bergmann observes, but also to the inadequacy of psychoanalysis itself. Psychoanalysis contains only two basic models of pathogenesis: a trauma model and a conflict model. Freud’s schematic model of trauma as a hypothetical breach in a hypothetical stimulus barrier is simply inadequate to the task of comprehending so extensive and devastating an experience as the Holocaust. Psychoanalysis had no model for understanding or healing such massive trauma. Conflict theory was the only tool available, but the employment of this model inevitably de-emphasized trauma in favor of infantile conflicts (Bergmann and Jucovy, 1982b).

The study group discovered that Holocaust-induced pathology could not be disentangled from “private pathology.” There were clear indications, however, that Holocaust survivors and their children shared certain common problems. These can be enumerated in a typical psychiatric fashion, but such a list fails to convey the underlying structure of the pathology. The group found that survivors live in a “dual reality,” composed of a consensual social reality on the one hand, and a private Holocaust reality on the other. The memory of Holocaust trauma exists outside of real time, lodged in what Langer (1995) calls “durational memory.” Normal memory fades as the past yields to the advancing present, but “durational memory” constitutes an eternal present.
The continuing experience of this private Holocaust reality invades daily life, giving rise to persecutory anxieties and episodic “breakthroughs” that may overwhelm reality testing. Caught in a timeless nightmare, survivors are unable to mourn and often deny their loss by fantasy restitutions, typically viewing their offspring as revenants. At the same time, children were also recast as Nazi’s or “little Hitlers,” monstrous incarnations of their parent’s implacable persecutors. In this continuing casting and recasting of children in Holocaust roles, the private Holocaust reality is passed on to the next generation and becomes a part of their own private reality, a phenomenon termed “double registration.” The central issue for the second generation is the inability to separate from parents. The dependency and victimization of the parents derails the autonomy of their children by embroiling them in the management of parental needs and losses. (In a separate contribution, Maria Bergmann [1982] made the observation that superego pathology, rooted in the amoral conditions of the Holocaust, was also a determinant of these separation problems).

In his discussion of treatment, Bergmann (1982b) recommends that analysts appreciate the complex interplay between Holocaust-induced pathology and “private pathology,” and avoid any doctrinaire emphasis on either. The analyst must also ask the patient about Holocaust experiences. This requires delicate timing because traumatized persons are extremely sensitive to penetrating interventions, but it is necessary, if only to inform the patient that the analyst, unlike other people the patient may have encountered, is prepared to listen, even to the most horrifying of memories. A second alteration in technique pertains to the issue of anonymity and the character of the therapeutic relationship. Survivors need to feel more connected to their therapists than other patients, especially given the horror they will have to relive in the course of treatment. This need is intensified by the fact that mourning must be a primary aspect of treatment. Mourning is a part of all analyses, but few analysands must mourn their entire families, communities, indeed their whole pre-Holocaust world. Moreover, the Holocaust survivor must mourn a world he has lost, while living in a world that has lost its goodness. If mourning and the resumption of love are to occur, something more than anonymity is required. But there is yet a deeper reason why the quality of anonymity is strained. Bergmann reminds us that the Holocaust is a social reality that is shared by everybody. This was not a private affair. The survivor knows in his heart what Abraham Heschel once said about the Vietnam War: Some men are guilty, but all men are responsible. Is the patient not entitled to know something of the identity of the doctor who purports to heal what the world did so little to prevent?

In a later paper (Bergmann, 1985), Bergmann identified rage as the driving force behind Holocaust-induced pathology. The natural reaction to victimization is an enraged act of vengeance. The traditional response of the Jewish people, however, is to remember. Zakhor. The cultivation of memory, Bergmann writes, is a form of sublimation, historically rooted in the act of relinquishing vengeance to God. In remembering an injustice, one reminds God to avenge it. Memory also serves as a link, not only with those who were lost, but also with those others who remain. With cultural advancement, remembering can inspire action in the service of social justice or other higher ideals. Preserving the memory of the Holocaust and its victims, speaking and writing about it,
commemorating rescuers and resisters, bearing witness for historical archives, and establishing positive bonds with other survivors are all forms of collective sublimation. In light of the limitations of clinical psychoanalysis, collective sublimation has a particular social and therapeutic virtue. But collective efforts require cooperation, and herein lies a tragic paradox. To sublimate rage collectively, the group must act cooperatively, but to act cooperatively, the individuals within the group must already be able to sublimate their rage. It may be that the development of collective structures for sublimation will require more than two generations. Bergmann (1985) quotes the Talmudic sage, Rabbi Tarphon: “It is not up to you to finish the task but neither are you free to desist from it” (p. 19).

_Psychoanalysis and Mythology_

Although Martin Bergmann is an analyst of the modern era, his avid interest in mythology is reminiscent of the first generation of analysts. Freud and his early followers viewed mythology as the product of a mythopoetic process. Our ancient forbears, they held, projected their unconscious impulses onto the gods, and in so doing, created mythical accounts which depicted their own unconscious strivings. These mythological tales could thus serve as source of data for psychoanalytic research. In _The Anatomy of Loving_ (1987), Bergmann observes that the drama of Oedipus played an unheralded role in Freud’s self-analysis. Freud had uncovered memories of his infantile affection for his mother and hostility toward his father, but it was only through Sophocles’ portrayal of the drama of Oedipal that Freud connected these memories with the incestuous and murderous impulses we now call the Oedipus complex. It was natural that psychoanalysts should seize on mythology as an important vehicle for psychoanalytic study.

Bergmann relates the history of the psychoanalytic study of mythology in two early papers (Bergmann, 1953, 1966a). In the first of these papers, he traced three phases in the history of psychoanalytic thinking about mythology. At first, psychoanalysts approached myths as if they were dreams. According to this early view, described above, the manifest content of myths, like that of dreams, represented disguised instinctual wishes. In a second phase, introduced by Totem and Taboo (Freud, 1913), myths were equated with collective memories, especially traumatic memories like the primal parricide and the totemic feast. The third phase was inaugurated when the newer ideas of psychoanalytic ego psychology were applied to the subject of mythology. Ego psychologists interpreted myths as tools for socialization that can promote repression and help channel instinctual drives. Bergmann (1953) issued a sharp and strikingly modern challenge to these formulations. He asserted that myths, contrary to analytic tradition, do not have a fixed and universal meaning. The meaning of the myth to the mythmaker need not be identical to those of the myth learner or myth user. Myths can have many functions, he argued, including those already described. He utilized case reports to demonstrate how patients use mythology in their own unique ways, often introducing their own idiosyncratic changes, to express and master psychic conflicts. The interpretation of myths in clinical analysis, he maintained, must be based on the patient’s associations and individual dynamics.
In the second of these papers (1966a), Bergmann emphasized that mythical themes evolve through history, and are repeatedly reintegrated into new patterns. Like products of individual psychology, myths undergo a “change of function” over time. In the stage of their creation, myths function as containers and organizers for projected psychic contents. Psychic turbulence that cannot be mastered internally can be managed and reshaped in the projective space of the myth. Once they are created, myths can be promulgated and employed by the group to promote socialization and adaptive social functioning. When they are internalized by the individual, myths serve psychological functions relating to the organization and regulation of mental life. The process of mythopoesis and internalization is repeated over and over again through history. When myths fail to contain psychic turbulence, the cycle of mythopoesis and internalization may be repeated.

These ideas are illustrated in Bergmann’s book, In The Shadow of Moloch (1992). In this stunning volume, Bergmann traces the origins of Western religion to the practice of child sacrifice, and to cultural efforts to abolish it and to master the traumatic memory of its practice. The sacrifice of children to murderous deities was widespread in the ancient Mediterranean world, whose peoples had projected murderous impulses toward their own children onto bloodthirsty gods who, in turn, demanded child sacrifice. Traces of an infanticidal culture are evident in both Judaism and Christianity. The theme of child sacrifice is explicit in the binding of Isaac, which concludes with the sacrifice of the ram instead of the son. The story is traditionally interpreted as a test of Abraham’s faith. But Bergmann observes that Isaac has disappeared from the narrative after the ram is sacrificed in his place. Where did he go? Bergmann holds that the existing text is a revised version of an earlier tale in which God demanded child sacrifice and meant it. The introduction of a revised edition signaled the cultural advance that inaugurated the Hebrew religion. In the new religion, God’s aggression is curtailed by the covenant he established with his people. In return for their compliance with his moral code, God assured his people of protection and love. The new mythology became an instrument for socialization that contained and tamed the projected infanticidal impulses of believers, and established God as a protective and more loving figure.

In the apocalyptic era following the crucifixion, however, the new mythology was overtaxed by the suffering of an oppressed people who no longer experience their god as protective and loving. As their rage and misery increased, their image of the deity reverted to its archaic and bloodthirsty character. The old impulse to sacrifice the first born to assuage the malevolence of their God reappeared in the retroactive interpretation of the Crucifixion as a sacrifice of God’s first-born son. The emotional price of this revised myth is a feeling of guilt for the sacrifice. This guilt was relieved, Bergmann writes, by shifting the blame for Crucifixion onto the Jews, a factor in Christian anti-Semitism. The introduction of the Eucharist, he observes, engendered further guilt by mobilizing cannibalistic impulses in those who partake in the communion service and thereby ingest the body and blood of the sacrificed child. When this new guilt was projected onto the Jews, it gave rise to the “blood libel”: Jews kill gentile children and use their blood to make the Passover matzoh.
In Bergmann view, the infanticidal impulse of the parent is a complement to the oedipal hatred of the child. If this is true, our traditional view of the Oedipus complex as a purely intrapsychic set of events must be revised, and set in a web of family relationships in which murderous intentions on the part of both parents and children are “interwoven as parts of the human condition” (p.314). The clinical implications of this view require that we help analysands differentiate between their hatred and that of their parents, and to find ways of accepting the pain of being hated by those most loved.

Contributions to Clinical Psychoanalysis

Martin Bergmann entered the field of psychoanalysis in the heyday of the Hartmann era, and his approach to clinical practice reflects the enduring influence of the new ego-psychology. At the heart of the new psychology was a rediscovery of the capabilities of the ego, and, in keeping with this fresh perspective, a corresponding alteration in the division of labor within the analytic situation. In the preceding history of psychoanalysis, the patient was assigned the primary task of producing free associations, while the interpretive function was left entirely in the hands of the analyst. This arrangement was transformed by the ego psychologists who produced a new model for the analytic relationship, rebalancing its previously authoritarian tilt and ushering in an era of greater collaboration between patient and analyst. The patient was newly charged with task of observing and reflecting upon his own free associations (Sterba, 1934), while the analyst assumed increasing responsibility for addressing resistances impeding the patient’s associative flow. To use Bertram Lewin’s felicitous phrase, often cited by Bergmann, the analyst became the “guardian of the free associations” (Bergmann, 1968; Lewin, 1954, 1955). In Bergmann’s view, this trend reached its acme in the landmark work of Ernst Kris (1956a, 1956b, 1956c), whose analysis of “the good hour” (Kris, 1956c) revealed the patient’s innate capacity to achieve insight through the exercise of the ego’s integrative function (Bergmann, 1993c). Bergmann credits Kris with laying the groundwork for the contemporary concept of the self-analytic function as a goal of psychoanalytic treatment (Gray, 1994). These emphases on the expanded role of the patient’s ego in the analytic process, the analyst’s crucial responsibility for safeguarding the free associative process, and the promotion of the patient’s self-analytic capacities have oriented Bergmann’s approach to clinical practice, and infused his work with a characteristic quality of robust humanism.

Although Bergmann’s identity as an analyst crystallized in the world of ego psychology, his attitude toward competing schools of thought is open-minded and reflective. Recognizing that the knowledge base of every school is incomplete, Bergmann recommends the study of divergent theories as a source for alternative explanations of clinical phenomena. New paradigms, Bergmann observes, offer correctives to the constraints of tradition by challenging habits of attention and inference. The formulation and testing of alternative hypotheses within the treatment situation hones the analyst’s understanding of familiar phenomena and promotes a grasp of the mysterious. Psychoanalytic theories developed in clinical work with patients outside the scope of classical psychoanalysis (such as self-psychology and certain variants of object relations theory) may enable the traditionally trained analyst to better assist non-neurotic patients.
as well as neurotic patients who regress to more primitive states of mind. The application of insights and special techniques developed outside one’s own orientation, Bergmann adds, necessitates no commitment to the alternative theory as a whole (Bergmann, 1990).

While Bergmann’s provenance is ego-psychological, his guiding commitment is less to any particular theory than to the sovereignty of the discovery process in treatment (Bergmann, 1968). Bergmann is a resolute advocate of psychoanalysis as an investigative procedure which promotes health by expanding self-knowledge. This is, of course, Freud’s classic conception of treatment, but it has been subject to repeated challenges throughout the course of psychoanalytic history. Ferenczi and Rank (1924), for instance, believed that sufficient knowledge of mental anatomy and psychopathology had been assembled to permit the replacement of investigative methods by more direct technologies of treatment. According to Waelder (1960), a similar stance characterized the later “neo-Freudians” who believed that generalizations drawn from previous clinical experience could serve as the basis for the interpretation of unconscious conflicts, a view obviating the need for any genuine investigation. Bergmann adamantly rejects these approaches. Psychoanalysis does not possess a complete knowledge of mental life, he argues, nor would such knowledge diminish the importance of the discovery process in treatment. As the pluralization of psychoanalytic theories has dramatically demonstrated, clinical data are susceptible to multiple interpretations. A program of interpretations based on any theory may thus be more persuasive than enlightening, Bergmann cautions, promoting identification rather than self-knowledge and compliance rather than autonomy (Bergmann, 1968). Even if psychoanalytic knowledge were complete, the discovery process in psychoanalysis could not be jettisoned without compromising the authenticity of the patient’s experience and sacrificing the self-analytic capability which treatment ought to promote.

The pursuit of discovery in psychoanalysis, Bergmann teaches, requires a dedicated effort to protect and cultivate the patient’s autonomous ego functioning. Self-knowledge is ultimately a private matter which depends upon the patient’s capacities for self-observation and reflection, judgment and reality-testing, and the organization of experience in concert with these functions. Following Hartmann, Bergmann refers to this superordinate organizing process as the ego’s integrative function (Hartmann, 1939). In Bergmann’s view, attention the patient’s integrative function should always be a clinical priority. The rationale for this approach is demonstrated by phenomenon of the so-called “good hour” (Bergmann, 1993c; Kris, 1956c). During the good hour, the patient independently produces a fresh understanding of his mental life to supercede a neurotically confused or distorted perspective. The patient’s success in the hour is the outcome of progressive ego activity, mobilized and facilitated by the treatment process. It is this mental activity, Bergmann reasons, that decisively advances the analysis. The nurture of the patient’s integrative functioning requires a further reassessment of the roles of patient and analyst in the conduct of the treatment. The patient, Bergmann argues, should be assigned primary research responsibilities for exploring his mental life and recovering the facts of his biography. The analyst’s crucial function is to enable the patient to succeed in this task by employing analytic technique to foster the interpersonal and intrapsychic conditions under which the patient may exercise his own mental abilities.
with progressive freedom and confidence. Free association is the indispensable wellspring of the analytic process, but integrative processes must ultimately accompany associative activity if treatment is to be successful (Bergmann, 1993c).

In Bergmann’s view, the analyst serves not only as the guardian of the patient’s free association, but also as the guardian of the patient’s integrative function. As guardian of the free associations the analyst provides ample room for uninterrupted free association, but as guardian of the integrative function he must also provide sufficient opportunity for uninterrupted observation, reflection, judgment, and related processes necessary for the exercise of the integrative function. Similarly, just as the analyst promotes free association by interpreting associative blocks and other resistances, he must also promote the freedom of the patient’s ego functioning by recognizing and interpreting the psychic conflicts in which the exercise of these functions may be entangled. With certain patients and under certain conditions, Bergmann notes, the analyst may also attempt to stimulate ego functioning directly by asking for the patient’s impressions or observations, a procedure that roughly parallels the direct encouragement of free association (Bergmann, 1993c).

Guardianship of the integrative process entails a disciplined evaluation of interventions with regard to their impact upon the patient’s integrative capability. Interventions that proffer the most accurate insights can undermine the patient’s functioning if they bypass the patient’s independent interpretive work. Interpretations that arise directly from the patient’s associations and are indigenous to the patient’s mental life facilitate integrative processing. Interpretations that contain embedded assumptions, “anticipatory ideas” (Freud, 1910), or elements that are foreign to the patient’s material are likely to confound the discovery process and upset the patient’s psychological digestion. “Inexact interpretations” should be avoided in favor of incomplete and tentative ones (Glover, 1931). Above all, the analyst’s interpretations should be offered in a genuine spirit of collaborative exploration, not authoritatively imposed upon the patient as a final or certain truth. While every analyst encourages the patient to consider his interpretations, the demand characteristics of the analytic situation should encourage neither agreement nor disagreement with the analyst’s interpretations. While transference inevitably complicates the patient’s experience of freedom, the analyst’s actual attitude must be genuinely neutral if the pressure of the transference on the patient’s ego functioning is to be relieved through interpretation.

Bergmann’s perspective offers a fresh solution to the dilemmas of reconstruction. By placing primary responsibility for reconstruction upon the patient, the analyst recognizes the patient’s privileged position as witness to his own life, while avoiding the damaging effects that are apt to accompany an authoritative rendering of one person’s biography by another. This position entails no devaluation of historical truth nor any equation of historical and narrative truth (Spence, 1982). Neither does it reflect a blinkered faith in the historicity of the patient’s reconstructions. Personal mythology is indeed a compromise of integrity, Bergmann holds, but historical truth is only a corrective to the deformities of memory if it is a truth recaptured through intimate encounters with one’s own experience and assembled through the exercise of one’s own mind. The patient may
not achieve a historically accurate autobiography, but insofar as his efforts to do so are grounded in an expanding apprehension of his own experience and governed by the exertions of his own ego, the patient’s striving for historical truth will itself accrue to the progressive health and integrity of his personality.

The clinical potential of Martin Bergmann’s approach to the analytic process is illustrated in a recent paper on the erotized transference (Bergmann, 1994). Freud was pessimistic about the possibility of analyzing patients who form erotized transferences. Ascribing their intractable sexual demands to an “elemental passionateness,” he concluded that such patients cannot be analyzed because they do not tolerate the frustration of their sexual desires (Freud, 1915b). This pessimistic attitude permeates much of the ensuing literature, Bergmann observes, a phenomenon which he attributes more to countertransference than to rational appraisal. Unless the analyst suspects severe psychopathology, Bergmann argues, the potential analyzability of such patients should not be dismissed. He recommends that the analyst treat the patient’s sexual passion as he would any other expression of the patient’s mental life, accepting it into the playground of the transference with an attitude of respect and curiosity as to its emotional meaning.

Bergmann suggests that treatment failures with patients forming erotized transferences may be more a consequence of the intense countertransferences these patients elicit than an inexorable corollary of the patient’s character. The success of any analysis rests upon the patient’s capacity to balance intense emotional experience with a more distanced self-observation. This “therapeutic split in the ego” (Sterba, 1934) is normally achieved through identification with the analyst, whose calm acceptance of the patient’s emotionality coupled with his curiosity about the patient’s experience provide the patient with a model for the conjoining of experience and observation that psychoanalysis requires. Insofar as countertransference disrupts the analyst’s normal functioning, this necessary process will not occur. If the analyst can tolerate the patient’s sexual demands while steadily pursuing an agenda of analytic understanding, however, the patient may learn to do likewise. The mobilization of the analytic process may then reveal what a dismissive attitude will most certainly obscure, that the erotized transference, like any transference, is a complex structure whose inner nature cannot be measured by its manifest surface. Like an adult who sees a child’s playful seductiveness as an invitation to a genital encounter, Bergmann argues, the analyst who perceives in the erotized transference nothing more than an “elemental passionateness” invites a tragic “confusion of tongues.” (Ferenczi, 1933).

Martin Bergmann’s fascination with the phenomena of love and the challenges of clinical psychoanalysis converge in his studies of transference love and the analytic relationship (Bergmann 1986, 1988b, 1994, 1997b, 1997c). Although these papers deal with many related issues, their central theme is the fate of the patient’s love for the analyst and its impact on the patient’s future life. In the classical model of psychoanalytic technique, a “fresh high tide” of transference love is mobilized to “wash away” the walls of pathogenic repression, expose unconscious libidinal fixations to the fresh air of consciousness, and thus to liberate the patient’s impeded capacity to love (Freud, 1907). As the analyst’s interpretations and abstinent stance enable the patient to recognize the
transference as a product of fantasy life, the patient naturally turns from the analyst to the pursuit of more realistic satisfactions outside the analysis. In the light of day, the theory predicts, the transference dissipates like a dream upon awakening. Unfortunately, this narrative of analytic events, culminating in the so-called ‘resolution of the transference,’ is not in keeping with the facts of analytic life.

The realities of psychoanalytic experience falsify this aspect of classical theory. The research of Pfeffer (1963) and Haskell et al. (1976) demonstrate that transference does not disappear after termination, and its residue may complicate the patient’s future adaptation. A basic assumption of clinical theory is that the mobilization of transference love will ultimately liberate the patient’s capacity to love in real life but this is not always true. Transference love can result in fixations to the analyst which are not so readily displaceable. Like a delicate hothouse flower, Bergmann observes, transference love grows in a uniquely favorable environment and may not survive when exposed the colder conditions of real life. Transference love, even when recognized as fantastical, may be the only love of which the patient is capable, and it’s nurture may leave the patient in a state of perpetual libidinal thralldom to the analyst.

The dilemmas of termination are further complicated by the fact that the therapeutic relationship is not solely a product of fantasy life. As transference distortions are reduced, the novel interpersonal features of the analytic relationship promote new experiences of care and relatedness. This is facilitated by contemporary techniques which emphasize the reparative potential of the analytic relationship, but it is an inevitable component of any analysis. In some cases, the new relationship with the analyst may represent “the first really reliable object relation in the patient’s life” (Reich, 1958, p. 230). The analyst may thus assume the emotional importance of a parent. If the analyst acquires such significance, termination of treatment would be tantamount to severing relations with a loving parent. Some analysts approach this dilemma by analogizing termination to weaning, suggesting that progressive internalization of the analyst produces a mental representation that is sufficiently sustaining to replace the person of the analyst in the patient’s life. Bergmann is extremely dubious about this assumption (Bergmann, 1988b).

When analyses were short and largely restricted to the interpretation of unconscious fantasy life, he writes, termination was a relatively simple matter requiring and receiving little theoretical elaboration. Changes in analytic practice have profoundly altered the ecology of the analytic situation and the nature of termination, but theory has not caught up with the changes in technique. Termination, writes Bergmann, is “the Achilles’ heel of psychoanalytic technique” (Bergmann, 1997b). If psychoanalysis is to address this dilemma, it will have to grapple with the power and fixity of transference love and this, Bergmann (1988b) argues, will require changes in the goals of treatment and concomitant modifications in its conduct. “What we need to aim at is not to resolve the transference neurosis,” he writes, “but to make sure that it forms a productive inner structure in the life of the former analysand” (p.151). This formulation parallels his observations about the function of the oedipus complex as an indissoluble wellspring of adult love (described in a preceding section). Although Bergmann offers no compendium of techniques, the basic implication of his position is compelling. The capacity for termination cannot be
assumed, nor should it be inferred from indications of analyzability. From its inception, then, the analysis must be conducted in a manner that safeguards and promotes the patient’s capacity for termination. Respect for the patient’s independent ego functioning and the attention to the patient’s integrative activity are conducive to a developing capacity for termination. But this must be accompanied by efforts to ensure that the patient employs his accumulating insights and developing capabilities in meaningful investments outside the treatment. In particular, the patient’s capacity for object relations outside the analysis must be nurtured with the same measure of disciplined care that is devoted to the nurture of the transference within it (Bergmann, 1997b).

The Course of Psychoanalytic History

While Bergmann’s interest in mythology evokes comparisons to the bold enthusiasm of the early analysts, his historical studies have no precedent in psychoanalysis. There are historical works, of course, like Freud’s “History of the Psychoanalytic Movement” (1914c) and Ferenczi and Rank’s The Development of Psychoanalysis (1924), for instance, but these are highly partisan tracts, more hortatory than historical. Similarly, there are numerous biographies of the great figures in psychoanalysis, a tradition inaugurated by Wittels (1931) and Puner (1947). Bergmann’s approach to psychoanalytic history is neither biographical in its content nor partisan in its spirit. Bergmann is primarily concerned with the history and evolution of psychoanalytic ideas, and his attitude is far more appreciative of the complexity of this history than any partisan tract.

Bergmann’s interest in psychoanalytic history has a brief history of its own. Very early in his career, Bergmann recalls, he believed that progress in psychoanalysis entails a progressive accumulation of new ideas that, together with those that preceded them, culminate in a more or less orderly expansion of knowledge. In his writings on mythology (1953, 1966a), discussed above, Bergmann described ego-psychological views as a supplement to the earlier ideas. He combined both the earlier and later views in a historical model (according to which myths undergo a “change of function”) and in a psychological model (according to which they serve multiple functions). In his paper on Paul Federn (Bergmann, 1963), however, this model of accumulating knowledge was strained. Federn’s ego psychology, which was based on topographic theory, did not conceptually mesh with the ego psychology of the structural model. This glitch exposed an underlying problem in the development of psychoanalytic knowledge. The existence of multiple and ill-fitting theoretical traditions, even within the main line of Freudian thought, precludes the ready integration of psychoanalytic knowledge. Psychoanalysis could not progress like a normal science (Kuhn, 1962) because the organizing paradigm of the scientific community had broken apart. With this discovery, Bergmann’s recognized the importance of developing a historical perspective as an orienting context for psychoanalytic studies. Thereafter, the emphasis in his writings falls more upon the clarification of differences, rather than on their integration. Bergmann’s historiography has served to subsume divergent positions within a unifying tradition, but without minimizing their differences or dismissing their implications. Psychoanalytic history has been marked by successive controversies and dissensions and many writers have regarded this as a failing of the profession. Bergmann, however, views
these historical developments as inevitable. In his Plenary address to the American Psychoanalytic Association (Bergmann, 1993a), he observed that there was “no royal road leading from hysteria to psychoanalysis” (pp. 932-33). It was Freud’s genius to assemble the scientific ideas he inherited, the clinical data he acquired, and the various hypotheses he developed into the complex edifice of psychoanalysis, but there was nothing inevitable about this particular assemblage. Another genius would have produced another psychoanalysis, Bergmann argued. If psychoanalysis was a discovery, it is equally true that it was a creation (Bergmann, 1989, 1993a, 1997a). By its very nature, psychoanalysis was open to innovation, not only by Freud’s followers, but by Freud himself. Freud’s theorizing took numerous twists and turns, both minor and major. These were prompted by problems in technique, as well as the need to accommodate theory to the accumulating clinical data. Each of the turning points in Freud’s evolving thought was a potential nodal point for a divergence of opinion among Freud’s followers.

The very birth of psychoanalysis marks the first of these nodal points. Psychoanalysis arose from the ruins of a failed reconstruction. When Freud recognized, in 1897, that his reconstructions of childhood sexual traumata were mistaken, he renewed his search for the agents of pathogenesis, an effort which eventuated in the discovery of psychic reality and the Oedipus complex. The role of unconscious wishes, omitted in the seduction theory, were established as the theoretical cornerstone of psychoanalysis. But the abandonment of the seduction theory sowed the seeds for future conflicts over the relative importance of social actuality and psychic reality in pathogenesis. The tension between the emphasis on one or the other continues to create division among analysts (Bergmann, 1993c), a phenomenon Bergmann observed even among psychoanalysts treating Holocaust survivors (1982b).

Bergmann divides the course of psychoanalytic history into three stages. The first stage, roughly from 1900 to 1919, are the years of discovery and consolidation in the development of Freud’s thought. During these years, there was an elegant harmony between psychoanalytic theory and technique. The theory held that neurosis was a disturbance caused by the revival in adult life of childhood traumas, or alternatively, of childhood wishes, which could not be integrated by the immature ego of the child and were therefore repressed. The psychoanalytic cure required that the repressed infantile material be made conscious, so that it would be subject to rational processing and mastery. It was assumed that the adult patient, having greater maturity and ego strength than he or she possessed in childhood, could integrate the pathogenic memories and wishes of childhood without further mental disturbance or renewed recourse to repression.

The controversies that occurred during these years arose because of differences of opinion regarding either basic elements of theory or specific problems of technique. Alfred Adler and Carl Jung challenged Freud’s basic theory of the instinctual roots of mental life and the role of infantile sexuality in pathogenesis. In addition to these theoretical differences, Jung hoped to transform psychoanalysis into an ecstatic religion (Bergmann, 1993c; see McGuire, 1974, pp. 294-295). Insofar as their fundamental positions were incompatible with those of Freud, “normal” scientific collaboration
between was impossible (Kuhn, 1962). Because these differences could not be contained within the fledgling psychoanalytic collective, they eventuated in organizational divorce. The history of these dissident movements has therefore remained outside the traditional family history of psychoanalysis.

Among those who remained within the collective, the major controversies were triggered by problems in technique, principally, the various hitches that thwarted the goal of making the unconscious conscious. Ferenczi’s experiments with “active technique,” for example, were introduced to enable patients to free associate productively. Similar controversies crystallized in response to recommendations Freud made in his papers on technique. The most important of these pertained to the idea of listening with “evenly suspended attention,” to the procedural stances of anonymity and abstinence, and, particularly, to the cultivation of the “transference neurosis” as a means of revivifying the patient’s history (Freud, 1914b). This idea gave rise to a whole school of analysts who, following Strachey (1934), argued that transference interpretations are the only mutative interpretations (Gill, 1979), a claim widely contested (Blum, 1983; Rangell, 1981).

The second stage opens in 1920 and continues until Freud’s death. During this era, clinical experience with sadomasochistic patients, negative therapeutic reactions, and other severe character neuroses necessitated a major overhaul of the theory of mental functioning, eventuating in the theory of the death instinct, the structural model, and the revised theory of anxiety. The new discoveries also falsified the premises of technique. Insight into the unconscious processes did not always produce therapeutic gains and often triggered exacerbations of pathology. The patient’s adult ego was not always capable of integrating and utilizing insight. The harmony between theory and technique was thus disrupted. Freud was pessimistic about the clinical efficacy of psychoanalysis and had little further to say about technique, none of it reassuring to his colleagues (e.g., Freud, 1937). The scene was thus set for major innovations. Melanie Klein developed her own version of psychoanalysis in which the death instinct and the vicissitudes of aggression were the central organizing concepts. The introduction of the structural model, Bergmann observes, inspired the development of two divergent schools of technique. Franz Alexander (1925) and James Strachey (1934), seizing on Freud’s new concept of the superego, saw a harsh superego as the chief culprit in neurosogenesis, and advocated a technical procedure which aimed at modifying the superego through the relationship with the benign figure of the analyst. Richard Sterba (1934) and Anna Freud (1936), on the other hand, advocated an ego-oriented approach, founded on an alliance between the analyst and the healthy sector of the patient’s ego, and emphasizing the patient’s self-observation and a systematic analysis of defensive functioning. The conflict between the ego analysts and the superego analysts opened an enduring chasm within psychoanalysis. Today, the legacy of this controversy may be discerned in the division between analysts who rely on interpretation and insight as the chief agent of structural change, and those relying on relational processes and internalization to alter psychic structure.

The third era of psychoanalysis began with the death of Freud, and continues to the present. When Freud died, the propensity for innovation naturally increased. At the same time, there was nobody left to authoritatively define the outer limits of psychoanalysis.
The third era has thus been characterized by the progressive pluralization of psychoanalytic thought. The organizational context for these developments was largely a product of the landmark “controversial discussions” of the British Psychoanalytic Society, held between 1941 and 1945. Home to both Anna Freud and Melanie Klein, and faced with the organizational challenge of managing the intense conflicts existing between their respective followers, the British Society decided that each of the two rival parties should remain within the organizational structure of psychoanalysis (King and Steiner, 1991). This historic accommodation inaugurated a more democratic and heterogeneous psychoanalysis, but, as history shows, it did not ensure mutual understanding.

Bergmann (1993c) employs a useful taxonomy to chart the historic maincurrents of psychoanalytic thought. He classifies all innovative contributors to psychoanalysis as either extenders, heretics and modifiers. Extenders are analysts like Abraham, Nunberg, Waelder, and Fenichel, who expanded the clinical or theoretical reach of psychoanalysis without challenging its basic tenets. Unlike extenders, heretics did, in fact, reject fundamental elements of the psychoanalytic paradigm and, as a result, were no longer able to work cooperatively within the scientific collective. Chief among the heretics in psychoanalytic history were Adler, Stekel, Jung, and much later, Wilhelm Reich, Rank, and Horney. Heresy, of course, only makes sense in relation to dogma. Since Freud’s death, there is no longer any authoritative psychoanalytic dogma and, as a result, the era of heretics is largely behind us. The third era might be characterized as the era of the modifiers. Although modifiers challenge existing tenets of psychoanalytic theory, they nevertheless claim descent from Freud, and so justify the psychoanalytic legitimacy of their contributions. “I’m a Freudian,” said Melanie Klein, “but not an Anna Freudian.” Hartmann, Klein, Winnicott, and Kohut typify the modifiers.

Bergmann’s taxonomy is a handy tool for analysis, sufficiently structured to organize an understanding of history, but loose enough to permit a productive debate. Arnold Richards (1994) raises basic issue regarding Kohut’s status as a modifier. While Richards does not contest the demise of authoritative dogma, he asserts as an alternative criterion the requirement that psychoanalytic technique conform to a psychoanalytic research tradition. Kohut’s introspective methodology does not satisfy this requirement because introspection, in contrast to free association, does not facilitate the uncovering of unconscious material. In Richards’ view, then, the legitimacy of any psychoanalytic school should be defined not by the content of its scientific claims, but by its adherence to a consensually determined scientific method. If this position prevails, the charge of heresy will, in the future, be supplanted by a more sophisticated analysis of the scientific procedures by which any theory is produced.

At the present time, however, the psychoanalytic community remains divided, and no consensus about psychoanalytic propositions or research methods prevails as the authoritative position. The so called “classical theory” can no longer be regarded as the mainstream of psychoanalysis, and as Arnold Richards (1994) notes, some analysts now regard classical Freudian theory itself as the heretical school. Pluralism is indubitably the preeminent fact of contemporary psychoanalytic life. This extreme diversity has naturally
prompted a search for common ground. Wallerstein (1990) grappled with this problem in his paper, “One psychoanalysis or many?” In his view, there are many metapsychologies in psychoanalysis, but there is only one clinical psychoanalysis. The metapsychologies, he argued, are only superstructures or “collective metaphors.” Despite the multiplicity of metaphors, he argued, all analysts gather the same basic data and follow more or less the same procedures in treatment. This is certainly a reassuring idea, but like an inexact interpretation, it reassures at a price. The best way to understand a school of psychoanalysis, Bergmann teaches, is to study what its adherents do. Such study clearly reveals that proponents of different theories practice different techniques (Bergmann, 1976c), and different techniques, we might add (following Richards, cited above), must inevitably produce different clinical data. In Bergmann’s view, then, there really are many psychoanalyses.

Bergmann sees a useful potential in the new pluralism and welcomes the intellectual freedom it signifies. The history of psychoanalysis reveals that dissident positions have offered important correctives to convention that are not initially recognized as such. As Bergmann writes, “nearly every deviation contained a kernel of truth to which psychoanalysis returned at a later date” (Bergmann, 1997a, p. 84). This is exemplified by the case of Alfred Adler. Adler, Bergmann writes, is all but forgotten by mainstream analysts, but the central role of aggression and of the “safeguarding tendency”, both pivotal to his position, were both introduced into classical theory within fifteen years of his departure (Freud, 1920, 1926). Indeed, aggression and signal anxiety are indispensable features of contemporary theory.

Similar observations might be made about other dissident movements. If Richards perspective prevails, Kohut’s contributions may be branded as heresy, but his emphasis upon the role of empathy in treatment, especially in work with narcissistically impaired patients, has probably been a useful corrective to an overly distant classical stance, silently influencing the clinical work of many mainstream analysts who overtly reject Kohut’s position. A parallel argument may be made regarding Ferenczi. Although Bergmann does not classify Ferenczi as a heretic, his late contributions were widely repudiated and his posthumous marginalization was tantamount to expulsion. In retrospect, we now see that Ferenczi’s technical experiments, however misguided or extreme, were groping attempts to improve the therapeutic potential of the analytic situation by introducing warmth and nurture as curative ingredients in the analytic process. Ferenczi’s innovations, developed by Michael Balint and his followers in London, inaugurated an alternative tradition of immense importance (Haynal, 1989). Decades after his death, Ferenczi’s concerns about the limitations of classical technique were echoed by mainstream American psychoanalysts who, in their own ways, tried to humanize the analytic situation (see, e.g., Gitelson, 1962; Loewald, 1960; Stone, 1961; Zetzel, 1956). Still, Bergmann (1997b) notes, when Stone (1961) introduced a more nurturing attitude, he emphatically distanced himself from Ferenczi. Bergmann regards such disclaimers as sops to the dragon of group cohesion. “A kernel of truth can be granted to a modifier,” he wrote, “but it has to be followed by massive criticism” (p.156).
In Bergmann’s view, the intellectual diversity of the profession, like the genetic diversity of a species, can serve to promote the survival and progress of the profession by ensuring that multiple adaptations are available for development and selection. Each of the alternative approaches will produce its own discoveries and its own outcomes. Pursuing the analogy to evolution, some schools will be better adapted to the particular social or clinical contexts in which they were developed. Schools that evolved in work with more disturbed patients are apt to be better suited to the needs of these patients than classical technique developed with neurotics. For the individual psychoanalyst, the new pluralism not offers alternative techniques to treat a wider variety of patients. Moreover, Bergmann argues, the new pluralism provides the individual with alternative hypotheses for understanding every patient.

Bergmann’s affirmative attitude towards diversity does not mean he believes that everybody is right and nobody is wrong or that all truth is relative. Bergmann is no epistemic nihilist, ready to regard every point of view as another “truth.” Psychoanalytic institutions should ensure academic freedom, he would argue, but the evaluation of theoretical disputes and competing clinical claims must ultimately rest with empirical findings. In the history of psychoanalysis, many theoretical and clinical innovations were eventually rejected when experience demonstrated their invalidity or limited utility. One can readily observe this progressive falsification in the evolving work of Freud alone: in the substitution of free association for hypnosis, in the abandonment of the seduction theory, in the superseding of topographical thinking by structural concepts, in the replacement of the toxicological theories of anxiety by concepts of signal anxiety and danger situations, and so on. Similarly, Ferenczi’s “active technique,” Reichian “character analysis,” Alexander’s “corrective emotional experience” all fell into disfavor because collective experience challenged their value. This is not to say that more sophisticated incarnations of these early innovations cannot prove useful. As Bergmann has often remarked, self-psychology may be viewed as a very refined model of “corrective emotional experience,” stripped of the role-playing and manipulation that made Alexander’s original technique so objectionable to most analysts. Bergmann is receptive to the ideas of all contemporary schools of psychoanalysis, not because he believes them all to be true, but because our scientific methods are not yet sufficiently sophisticated to adequately assess all their competing claims. We simply do not know who among us comes closest to a veridical understanding of mental life or who practices the most effective methods of treatment, and even if we did, we would not know from which tradition further useful advances might arise.

While the new pluralism holds promise for psychoanalysis, Bergmann observes, it is not without its perils. Pluralization has broken the central authority of the old psychoanalytic orthodoxy but, unfortunately, it has produced a proliferation of orthodoxies, each with its own parochial traditions. Citing the biblical story of the Tower of Babel, Bergmann warns of the progressive replacement of our shared language by the idiosyncratic terminologies and esoteric concepts of parochial schools (1993a). Insofar as our capacity to communicate with each other is compromised, the promise of our pluralism is squandered. The optimal response to pluralization, then, is not a return to dogmas or a
leveling of differences in the search for some least common denominator called “common ground,” but a concerted effort to make our pluralism productive.

Bergmann sees no simple panaceas for the fragmentation that has accompanied the proliferation of psychoanalytic schools. Numerous institutional and individual hurdles will have to be overcome to fulfill the potential for a productive pluralism. Not only must the authoritarian structures and theoretical orthodoxies of the individual schools be challenged, rigid identifications with authorities and parochial traditions must be softened. To operate intellectually within a “multicultural” psychoanalytic universe, we will need to develop fluency in the multiple languages of psychoanalysis. We will need to become far more familiar with each other’s literature, understand each other’s concepts within their own frames of reference, and study the character of each other’s clinical outcomes. This will require a sophisticated knowledge of psychoanalytic history, because it is only in the context of history that we can understand our diverse traditions and their relation to each other. In Bergmann’s view, history is the vehicle of coherence.

Like members of a large and fragmented family, we have remembered only our individual lines of descent. The collective memory of the psychoanalytic community, readily known to an earlier generation, has been lost with the progressive branching of our traditions. Freud is the common progenitor so we remember him. But our common internalization of Freud is itself problematic because there are many Freuds, each construed from different branches on the family tree (Bergmann, 1993d). But even if we could all possess an identical Freud, this would be an inadequate basis for mutual understanding or collective scientific activity. We are all removed from Freud by too many generations and by too many fateful turns in the course of psychoanalytic history for Freud to serve this unifying function. If we are to remain united despite our dispersion into many camps, we will need a more robust understanding of our relatedness, and this will require a knowledge of our history which includes all the branches of our family tree.

In his 1985 paper on the Holocaust, Bergmann cited a monograph on the function of Jewish memory, entitled “Zakhor,” by Yerushalmi (1982). The injunction to remember the events of the past, Yerushalmi observed, occurs one hundred and sixty-nine times in the Hebrew Bible. Yerushalmi related this injunction to the preservation of collective memory and to the survival of a group that spent most of its history in dispersion. Collective memory is the glue for social cohesion. Some analysts, like Wallerstein (1990), search for some patch of common ground to ensure social cohesion. Bergmann, on the other hand, has created common ground through historical studies which restore our relatedness by restoring collective memory.

The Psychoanalytic Universe of Martin S. Bergmann

While orthodoxy is a central topic in Bergmann’s historical studies, Bergmann’s basic concerns about the impact of authority on the creativity of individual analyst and on destiny of the psychoanalytic enterprise are discernible throughout his writings. One may discern in the body of his work the imprint of his own determined response, not only to the constraints of psychoanalytic orthodoxy, but to the emotional strains and insecurities
which drive individual analysts to identify so tenaciously with psychoanalytic authorities the “truths” they profess. Indeed, the entire body of his work, from his first paper contesting the invariant unconscious meaning of myths in clinical analysis (Bergmann, 1953) to his most recent paper on termination as the Achilles heel of technique (Bergmann, 1997b) may be seen as a challenge to dogma and a corrective to the credulity of true believers.

Bergmann is a deeply restive thinker with a keen ear for contradictions and obfuscations in theory, and for failures of fit between theory and experience. He is inexorably drawn to these flaws: he picks and probes, he pulls at loose ends, and eventually, the ill-woven patches in the theory begin to unravel. One cannot study Bergmann’s thought without becoming somewhat discomposed, but one is never left without encouragement and the compensation of perspective. However incisive his critique, however insistent his disquiet, Bergmann’s informed and steady confidence in the psychoanalytic enterprise buoys the reader’s spirit. Bergmann’s work thus has a double impact. On the one hand, it unsettles the reader, while on the other, it provides the rational basis for a more sober and sophisticated self-assurance. A sense of “confident uncertainty” is perhaps the most distinctive consequence of a sojourn in the universe of Bergmann’s thought.

A characteristic concomitant of an immersion in Bergmann’s writings is a subtle alteration of the sense of time. As the reader settles into the flow of Bergmann’s thought, the experience of the present moment is subtly and progressively extended by a seamless connection with historical time, at one end, and future time, at the other. This phenomenon is, of course, a consequence of Bergmann’s historical sensibility, his presentation of psychoanalysis as an intergenerational work-in-progress. This expansion of the present tense can be deeply pleasurable, but it is inevitably paralleled by a certain contraction of confidence. History situates the reader amid a welter of contradictory truths, many propounded with the assurance of revealed truth. Our history is peppered with the idiosyncratic certitudes of bygone eras, as obviously “true” in their time as contemporary doctrines often appear today. By taking a long view, Bergmann gently challenges not only the self-evident superiority of any particular school, but the reflexive provincialism of time and the narcissistic equations of modernity and innovation with progress. The cumulative impact is an intimate acquaintance with the very human character of our science.

This is not to say that Martin Bergmann invites the reader into a surreal world of postmodern uncertainties in which neither personal experience nor empirical research can contribute to knowledge. “Learning must be possible,” he once quipped, “because most of us are better analysts now than we were before!” Bergmann demonstrates that much can indeed be learned from a careful study of cases, even from published case reports. His implicit epistemological stance, in the tradition of Western science, weds rational and empirical methods, so that reason is bound to observation and subjected to the constraints of whatever facts this produces. Alternative hypotheses must be measured against the facts and adopted on the basis of goodness of fit, he writes in his paper on free association (Bergmann, 1968). The large fly in the ointment here, as postmodernists are quick to emphasize, is the inescapable circularity of perception and preconception. All
perception, they hold, is organized by the orienting interests and beliefs we bring to the task of observation. Naturally, Bergmann is cognizant of this epistemological dilemma, but he does not therefore abandon the quest for knowledge content himself with the consolation prize of some narrative truth, judged to be valid because it is found to be coherent. Bergmann holds out for a truth that corresponds to reality. Although he agrees that “facts” are in some measure a product of our tendentious organization of experience, he also maintains that reality wields a force of its own. Reality is not shapeless or infinitely malleable in the prehensile grip of our cognition. Quite to the contrary, the sharp features of reality can puncture the veil of false beliefs which organize our impressions. If preconceptions shape our perception of reality, reality also acts back upon us and demands a reckoning. Bergmann thus stands closer to Freud than to the postmodernists: “if there were no such thing as knowledge distinguished among our opinions by corresponding to reality, we might build bridges just as well out of cardboard as out of stone” (Freud, 1933, p. 176).

If Bergmann’s thought reflects a commonsense positivism, it should be emphasized that he is rarely absolutely positive in his pronouncements. Since no program to wrest truth from the ambiguities of perception can succeed absolutely, scientific findings can only be propounded with greater or lesser degrees of confidence. Some subjects, he notes, are more amenable than others to investigation, and discoveries in these areas may be regarded with greater confidence than others. Bergmann is more sanguine about the advance of knowledge regarding clinical technique or the dynamics of particular pathologies than he is in regard to less accessible areas of psychoanalytic interest. No scientific procedure, he realizes, certainly not the psychoanalytic case study, has been able to extract from nature the elusive secrets of our innermost nature and design. While Bergmann is skeptical about psychoanalytic claims to truth, he is never cynical about its pursuit. Bergmann’s attitude toward the scientific achievements of psychoanalysis is aptly expressed in a comment made by Freud and often cited by Bergmann: “When you think of me, think of Rembrandt: a little light and a great deal of darkness” (Bergmann and Hartmann, 1976, p. xiv).

Bergmann’s attitude toward the psychoanalytic knowledge follows the injunction of the Talmudic sage, Rabbi Tarphon: “It is not up to you to finish the task but neither are you free to desist from it.” The affective environment of Bergmann’s works is thus permeated with the tension that arises between the ineluctable uncertainties of our science, on the one hand, and the exhortation to persevere in our efforts at enlightenment, on the other. The effect of this tension may evoke a sense of the tragic at times, as if Bergman’s exhortation were a heroic cry in the face of futility, but the atmosphere is never truly tragic for Bergmann is fundamentally hopeful about our capacity for discovery and knowledge. If the expansion of the sense of time in Bergmann’s works trims the narcissistic overvaluation of our present achievements, it also compensates us by evoking a future in which we symbolically partake and in which our ends are more fully realized. The atmosphere is thus sober without being somber.

There is another dimension to Bergmann’s writings that is more subtle, and potentially more powerful, in its impact on the reader. In a manner unparalleled in the
psychoanalytic literature, Bergmann’s writings evoke in the reader the sense of being in a human or collegial environment. His papers are densely populated with the figures of analysts and other thinkers, both historic and contemporary, who appear and reappear, summoned, as it were, whenever their contributions will further discussion of the issues at hand. Bergmann’s works thus communicate more than ideas. They animate a virtual community of discussants, a convocation of the sages, whose ongoing dialogue crosses the barriers of time and temperament that divided them in actuality. The reader enters into relation, then, not only with Martin Bergmann but with a whole assemblage of scholars. Bergmann himself is always present, his own voice is clear and distinguishable, but it is never a lone voice. He speaks as one in a collective, and it is the vibrant life of the collective, with its searching debates and deliberations, that forms the living environment of Bergmann’s collected works.

The populous character of Bergmann’s works is, naturally enough, an expression of his scholarly commitment to the recording of psychoanalytic history, but there is also something else at work here, an attitude that is not only academic but also libidinal in nature. Insofar as it is libido and not solely the imperatives of historiography that convenes this timeless congress of thinkers, it is libido that determines its social ethos and character as a group. Bergmann’s psychoanalytic universe is electric, charged with the spirit of debate, controversy, and occasionally with the emotionality of fractious rivalries, and yet it is curiously united in the imagination, its historic combatants coexisting within a single body politic. With rare exceptions (most notably, Carl Jung), the dissidents and heretics of history are returned to the collective where they rejoin the ongoing deliberations of the academy. Bergmann’s universe is no peaceable kingdom, but it is far more congenial and collegial than the real world of psychoanalysis.

If the sense of unease that permeates Bergmann’s world is balanced by his optimism about our future potential, the human environment of Bergmann’s work makes this tension not only tolerable but also enjoyable. The reader is never alone, but in the company of giants, of the wise men of psychoanalysis and the intellectual heroes of Western culture, erudite colleagues in a grand endeavor. The sustaining function of this sense of colleagueship should not be dismissed too lightly. While psychoanalysts since Freud have prized the virtue of truth as the preeminent orienting value of profession, we have learned that self-knowledge and a grasp of reality assures our sanity without necessarily sustaining our spirit. A robust hardiness of soul is less the product of knowledge than of love. In times of self-doubt and suffering, we are nurtured by our relationships, not only with our intimates, but with our heroes, our forbears, our mentors. An inner world, well populated by beloved and inspiring figures, is a mainstay of the spirit, a source, as Leon Saul wrote, of “inner sustainment” (Saul, 1970). This is true, not only for the emotionally weak or fragile, but for the most ruggedly rational and independent of characters. Faced with the defections of his rebellious disciples, and later, confronting the unparalleled specter of the Nazis, Freud himself turned to an inner relationship with Moses to muster the ego strength needed to meet these challenges (Bergmann, 1975b).
Reflecting on the hardships of the psychoanalytic vocation, Bergmann observed that few analysts can take the psychoanalytic journey without a Virgil as their guide (Bergmann, 1993d). In the early years of the psychoanalytic movement, most analysts took the figure of Freud as their authoritative mentor. While their common attachment to Freud ensured the unity of the collective, their dependence on Freud’s authority promoted an oppressive orthodoxy. In the contemporary pluralistic culture of psychoanalysis, Bergmann notes, students are as likely to form such relationships with Winnicott or Kohut or the leader of some other school, as they are with Freud. As a result, the single unifying orthodoxy of Freudian psychoanalysis has been supplanted by multiple insular orthodoxies. Bergmann is surely right that the difficulties of the psychoanalytic journey drive most analysts, especially beginning analysts, to identify with psychoanalytic authorities. But must this propensity inevitably lead to parochialism and orthodoxy?

Although Bergmann acknowledges Freud as his enduring Virgil, it is clear that the character of his relationship to Freud has not been that of a true believer. Freud is a central figure in Bergmann’s world, and his presence is discernible in virtually all his papers, but Freud is never Bergmann’s sole source or interlocutor, nor is his relationship to Freud ever obsequious. While Freud is certainly a senior member of the academy, he is an authority with whom Bergmann engages in passionate disputes. Bergmann’s relationship with Freud is not disrupted by their disagreements, nor is either man threatened or diminished by it. A vigorous debate, aggressively pursued, is indigenous to their relationship, part of its character and purpose. The Freud of Martin Bergmann’s universe welcomes the challenges raised by each new generation of analysts, and nurtures the independence of their thought. In this regard, Bergmann’s Freud is not the historical Freud, but a Freud redrawn on a model of authority and of intergenerational relations that derives from a humanistic tradition that goes back to the Old Testament. Bergmann cites with admiration and pleasure the extraordinary Biblical story of Jacob who wrestles with an angel of God all night, and refuses to let him go until he receives the angel’s blessing (1992, p.74). The story of Jacob and the angel dramatically expresses the vision of a loving god who endorses the human challenge to his divine dictates. As Bergmann has wrestled mightily with Freud, he has encouraged his students to wrestle with him, and neither has had to forego the blessings of their mentor.

The humanistic model of authority that characterizes Bergmann’s universe permits the reader to form relationships with authorities that provide sustenance without requiring submission, that support the individual’s independence rather than subvert it. At the same time, the bustling population of Bergmann’s writings offers an opportunity to relate to a wide spectrum of figures. The analyst in search of support has access to the whole academy, and can form ties to any of its members without the censure or rebuke of any competing authority. These relationships are nurtured and sustained by Bergmann’s work because he situates the great figures of psychoanalytic history in a collegial circle of his own devising, linking their contributions to psychoanalytic thought within a historical perspective that emphasizes the collective character of the enterprise. For the reader who comes to appreciate Bergmann’s sense of psychoanalysis as a collective effort, who are invigorated by the experience of membership in a vibrant and heterogeneous analytic community, Bergmann’s writings offer an expanded basis for identification, not with any
individual authority or school, but with the collective as a whole, with “a humanity of analysts” (Chiarandini, 1994). In this way, Martin Bergmann’s work provides both an impetus and a facilitating context for a critical reevaluation of habitual insularities and for the progressive development of more robust and resilient professional identities.

Bibliography


