

* For a quick, accurate, stimulating picture of the present situation in psychotherapy, see Richard M. Restak's "Psychiatry in Search of Identity," 12Jan75 NYT "Ideas & Trends" section of "The News of the Week in Review." [The "soft-headed" (trained before 1970) explain by environment and psychosocial factors; the "hard-headed" (trained after 1970) explain by brain conditions and heredity.]

1. What's most promising of creative-productive dialog between old priest and new is that now, 1975, both professions--clergy and psychotherapist--have been humbled by "events." Biblically, the humilification of individuals/communities/nations/professions is a divine process of breaking down ["repentance"] in preparation for reconstitution ["faith," trust, building up by "grace" in humility and hope]. Pastors have been and are humiliated (but are beginning renewal), and now it's the new priest's turn--as in E. Fuller Torrey's THE DEATH OF PSYCHIATRY.
2. Under provincial consciousness, any profession is safe, operating with a single, unchallenged picture of the world. Copernicus, Galileo, Darwin, Feuerbach, Marx, and Freud were smashing attacks on the complacency of the old priest within his biblical (and, partly, pseudobiblical) Weltbild, with "sin" as its universal explanation of cosmic, historic, and personal untowardnesses --to use jargon, "sin" as the etiology of "evil."
3. American psychotherapy, till the late 1960s, had been as much under provincial consciousness--in this case, the psychodynamic model of "mental illness." Setting extra-human untowardnesses aside as irrelevant, this model's etiology of human misery is psychosocial ("problems" rooting in developmental malformations in the psyche during childhood and adolescence--the "psyche" variously, and usually vaguely, defined according to at least quasimechanistic, quasi-materialistic, quasideterministic "dynamics"). Old priest and new priest were locked into each his/her own single picture of "how things are," though both professions used various techniques to practice the "understanding" sanctioned by the agreement in theory. The fact both professions are now increasingly willing to accept is that life will not, when honestly lived, sustain-any single world-picture. Our Sitz im Leben, here and now, is not just cultural pluralism, but figural pluralism, with the "figures" [world-pictures] clashing [eidoclasm], merging, submerging, emerging. For me as Christian and as clergy, the biblical way of seeing the world is central, centering, and--I claim--more nearly adequate than any other picture. [Note this formula when the practitioner of a world-picture has run out beyond the edges of her/his picture: "the mystery of," e.g. "the mystery of evil/good."]
4. This morning, an aged, gentle, very wealthy atheist came to see me, deeply convinced that humankind must surrender tribal-religious roots, which (he said) "lead to nothing but strife and violence, and make human survival impossible." He was hungry and lonely, and I gave him supportive readings and some names to meet and develop a concern network with. I was so "for" him, and he was so grateful, that he was shocked when I revealed that his world-picture and mine are enemies, and that from my way of using my world-picture I could more affirm him than he, from his way of using his world-picture, could affirm me. He left, thank God, more confused than when he came...and of course I'll write him. I believe in the possibility, the actuality, of a picture-transcending, occupation-transcending global affirmation, with each affirming one's own tribal (committed) roots [in contrast to my friend's view, and Dewey's A COMMON FAITH].
5. There's a vital interlock between explaining "the situation" by cause or origin ["etiology"], seeing patterns (Gestalten) in the situation ["symptomology" or "symptomatology"], and anticipating consequences as projections (scenarios) and as yearnings ["eventuality"]. Etiology colors present and future. Etiology, ideally, will be comprehensive: things have gone wrong because of sin, psychotwisting ("emotional" traumas in childhood and adolescence), heredity, and neuronal malfunctioning [brain problems]. Ergo, the situation is worse for the helper and better for everybody else!