Changing Conceptions of Psychoanalysis
Changing Conceptions of Psychoanalysis: The Legacy of Merton M. Gill

edited by

Doris K. Silverman

and

David L. Wolitzky

THE ANALYTIC PRESS

2000 Hillsdale, NJ

Copyrighted Material
**Contents**

*Contributors*  
vii  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART I</th>
<th>MERTON GILL’S PLACE IN PSYCHOANALYSIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
<td>Gill's Influence on Psychoanalysis: An Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>David L. Wolitzky and Doris K. Silverman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART II</th>
<th>PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL REMINISCENCES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2</td>
<td>Merton M. Gill: Reminiscences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section One:</td>
<td>Merton Max Gill, M.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Robert S. Wallerstein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Two:</td>
<td>Merton Gill: Teacher, Scholar, Friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Philip S. Holzman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Three:</td>
<td>Merton Gill: A Sketch of His Life and Some Reminiscences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Robert R. Holt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Four:</td>
<td>A Personal View of Gill's Paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lawrence Friedman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section Five:</td>
<td>Arguments with Merton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Henry F. Smith</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART III</th>
<th>MERTON GILL: THEORETICIAN AND PSYCHOANALYST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>Merton M. Gill: A Study in Theory Development in Psychoanalysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Irwin Z. Hoffman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>Merton M. Gill: Publications and Awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART IV</th>
<th>CURRENT CONTROVERSIES IN PSYCHOANALYSIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>My Theoretical Differences with Merton Gill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Robert R. Holt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Reflections on Current Conceptions of Countertransference and Gill's Hermeneutic Construal of Psychoanalysis</td>
<td>Morris N. Eagle</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Are Minds Objects or Dramas?</td>
<td>Lawrence Friedman</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Psychoanalysis as a One-Person and a Two-Person Psychology</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The One-Person–Two-Person Controversy: A View from the Future</td>
<td>Theodore J. Jacobs</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Arithmetic of a One- and Two-Person Psychology: Merton M. Gill, An Essay</td>
<td>Doris K. Silverman</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy:</strong> Critical Differences or Blurring of Boundaries?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Merton Gill, Psychotherapy, and Psychoanalysis: A Personal Dialogue</td>
<td>Robert S. Wallerstein</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>A Psychoanalysis on the Chair and a Psychotherapy on the Couch: Implications of Gill's Redefinition of the Differences Between Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy</td>
<td>Paolo Migone</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Psychotherapy as Applied Psychoanalysis: Further Arguments Vis-à-Vis Merton Gill</td>
<td>John E. Gedo</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Transference</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The Interpretation of the Transference: Merton Gill’s Contribution</td>
<td>Otto F. Kernberg</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The Conception of Transference</td>
<td>David L. Wolitzky</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The “Early” Interpretation of Transference: Implications for the Concept of Regression and the New/Old Object Experience in Psychoanalytic Work</td>
<td>Steven H. Cooper</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Index</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contributors

Steven H. Cooper, Ph.D. is Training and Supervising Analyst, Boston Psychoanalytic Society and Institute, and Clinical Associate Professor of Psychology, Beth Israel Hospital, Harvard Medical School.

Morris N. Eagle, Ph.D. is Professor of Psychology, Derner Institute of Advanced Psychological Studies, Adelphi University, and Faculty, New York University Postdoctoral Program in Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy.

Lawrence Friedman, M.D. is Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Cornell University Medical College, and Faculty, New York Psychoanalytic Institute.

John E. Gedo, M.D., as author and editor, has contributed 18 volumes to the psychoanalytic literature.

Irwin Z. Hoffman, Ph.D. is Lecturer in Psychiatry, University of Illinois College of Medicine at Chicago, Faculty and Supervising Analyst, Chicago Center for Psychoanalysis, and author of Ritual and Spontaneity in the Psychoanalytic Process (TAP, 1998).

Robert R. Holt, Ph.D. is Professor of Psychology, Emeritus, New York University.

Philip S. Holzman, Ph.D. is Professor of Psychology, Emeritus, Harvard University.

Theodore J. Jacobs, M.D. is Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, and Training and Supervising Analyst, New York and New York University Psychoanalytic Institutes.

Otto F. Kernberg, M.D. is Director, Personality Disorders Institute, The New York Hospital-Cornell Medical Center, Westchester Division, and Training and Supervising Analyst, Columbia University Center for Psychoanalytic Training and Research.

Paolo Migone, M.D. teaches in the Department of Psychology, University of Parma, Italy, and is the author of Terapia Psicoanalitica.
Doris K. Silverman, Ph.D. is Training and Supervising Analyst and Faculty, Institute for Psychoanalytic Training and Research, and Supervisor and Faculty, New York University Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis.

Henry F. Smith, M.D. is Training and Supervising Analyst, Psychoanalytic Institute of New England East, and Associate Editor, Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association.

Robert S. Wallerstein, M.D. is Professor Emeritus and former Chairman, Department of Psychiatry, University of California San Francisco School of Medicine, and Training and Supervising Analyst, San Francisco Psychoanalytic Institute.

David L. Wolitzky, Ph.D. is Director, New York University Psychology Clinic, and Executive Committee Member, Faculty, and Supervisor, New York University Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis.
PART I

MERTON GILL'S PLACE
IN PSYCHOANALYSIS
Chapter 1

Gill's Influence on Psychoanalysis: An Introduction

David L. Wolitzky and Doris K. Silverman

I

Merton Max Gill was born in Chicago on July 26, 1914 and died there on November 13, 1994. His four score included a remarkable career in psychoanalysis. Gill's influence has been amply evident not only during the nearly half century of his illustrious career but it will endure for many generations. Thus, Gill will have a secure and distinguished place in the history of psychoanalysis. No one stated it more effectively than Wallerstein (1984): “It has been Merton Gill’s fate to be an acknowledged leader in (American) psychoanalysis almost from the beginning of his career. An uncommon percentage of his writings have been almost instantly—and justly—hailed for their critical influence at particular points in the history of analysis in America, in relation both to psychoanalytic clinical practice . . . and to psychoanalytic theory formulation” (p. 325). He also cites several publications by Gill that clearly have become classics in the psychoanalytic literature.

It is evident that with Gill’s death, psychoanalysis has lost one of its brightest stars. Gill illuminated in a most incisive, lucid manner several key controversies in psychoanalytic theory and practice. Our compilation of these essays in Gill’s honor is timely, not merely as a tribute to him, but because the issues he wrote about are central to the current ferment in psychoanalysis.

We have invited contributions from a distinguished group of analysts whose work either reflects Gill’s direct influence or who, by virtue of their own theoretical and clinical writings, are in a position to comment on Gill’s contributions. Although many of the authors in this volume have an affinity with Gill’s views, others will be critical. Gill enjoyed challenging discourse and appreciated a closely reasoned argument even if its author disagreed with him. In fact, we reminded the colleagues who contributed to this volume that the best way to honor Gill’s memory would be to write...
critical and incisive analyses of the kind so characteristic of Gill on issues with which Gill passionately grappled. We hope the reader will agree that our contributors have met this challenge well.

As Hoffman (chapter 3) makes clear in his masterful summary of Gill’s many contributions, Gill’s work encompassed a variety of domains, including hypnosis, psychiatric interviewing, psychological testing, metapsychology, and clinical theory. We chose to restrict the focus of this volume to the issues that occupied Gill in the last two decades of his career rather than to include papers that span the entire range of his interests and contributions. In the case of Freudian metapsychology, for example, the controversy has virtually disappeared from the analytic literature, and Gill’s position on this issue had a dominant influence on its demise.

In recent years, Gill was particularly focused on the nature of the transference and the psychoanalytic situation. Most of the contributors to this volume take up issues related to the concept of transference, the patient/analyst relationship, and the nature of the psychoanalytic situation. These issues continue to be most relevant to the current debates and controversies concerning effective strategies and techniques of psychoanalytic treatment. They also are related to broader philosophical, epistemological considerations. Accordingly, we have included contributions that are germane to these more general concerns (see particularly chapters 5 through 9, by Holt, Eagle, Friedman, Jacobs, and Silverman, respectively).

In the last two decades of his work, Gill repeatedly emphasized that the interpretation of the transference, as he conceived it, was vital for effective treatment and that it should be the defining characteristic of psychoanalysis. He argued that transference was unwittingly overlooked or insufficiently explored in clinical work. Gill’s conceptualization of the transference emphasized the interaction of the patient and the analyst as a relationship of mutual influence. Gill forcefully rejected the idea that the analyst had a superior view of the patient’s intrapsychic reality and that the transference was a distortion to be judged and corrected by the analyst. He stressed instead the exploration of the plausibility of the patient’s construal of the analyst. Gill believed that his view was consistent with a hermeneutic-constructivist position. In addition to embracing this philosophical position, Gill abhorred the notion of distortion because it implied that an analyst who held this view was engaged in an authoritarian manipulation of the patient and would be less likely to acknowledge that the patient was being influenced by something real in the analyst. We know, based on our interactions with him and on his published work, that Gill encountered enough rigidity, arrogance, and pomposity among his analytic colleagues during (and after) his formative analytic years to have little tolerance for an attitude that suggests that the analyst has a lock on the truth. Our information is bolstered by Hoffman’s (1996a) remarks in his tribute to Gill during the February 10, 1995 memorial service for Merton:
I think we have to understand that Merton was on a mission. Something bothered him about the way psychoanalysts worked and thought about their work. . . . Although he couched his concerns in scientific, theoretical terms, I believe that Merton’s impression of mainstream psychoanalytic practice violated his sense of values. He felt that analysts had a great deal of power in the analytic situation and that, all too often, they unwittingly abused that power instead of trying to reduce it and/or to exercise it in a fully responsible and helpful way. I think Merton felt that this abuse of power was thoroughly institutionalized and rationalized theoretically so that it became very difficult to bring it to light and subject it to critical scrutiny. Under the guises of the blank screen, of the transference as a simple distortion, of the rule of abstinence, of the claim of analytic neutrality, of a one-person psychology . . . what Merton found was one human being who was in a position of authority blaming another who was in a subordinate position for everything that developed in their relationship that was problematic. Whatever went wrong, the analyst could so easily come up smelling like a rose. But what Merton smelled in this scenario was a rat, a subtle form of domination [pp. 28–29].

Chapter 7 by Friedman and chapter 14 by Wolitzky take up this theme and its implications.

From this perspective, one can appreciate that Gill preferred the notion of plausibility rather than distortion in characterizing the patient’s reaction, that he emphasized the coconstruction of the transference, and that he found a two-person, social-constructivist view conceptually appealing. In this connection, he was pleased to quote Racker (1968) who said:

The first distortion of truth in the myth of the analytic situation is that it is an interaction between a sick person and a healthy one. The truth is that it is an interaction between two personalities in both of which the ego is under pressure from the id, the superego, and the external world; each personality has its internal and external dependencies, anxieties, and pathological defenses; each is also a child with his internal parents; and each of the whole personalities—that of the analysand and that of the analyst—responds to every event of the analytic situation [p. 132].

At the same time, Smith (in chapter 2) cites Gill’s comment that “it also reminds me . . . of what I think is one of Sullivan’s very interesting remarks where he said: ‘There are two anxious people in the room; it is to be hoped that the therapist is the less anxious of the two.’”

Given the views stated above, exclusive reliance on a so-called “one-person” psychology was untenable. In his final book, however, Gill
recognized the importance of unconscious fantasy and, therefore, the necessity for both a one-person and a two-person psychology. As he (Gill, 1994) put it, "It remains true that the great discovery peculiar to psychoanalysis, the internal factor in the sense of unconscious fantasy, is the one that psychoanalysis must zealously protect" (p. 28). Richards and Lynch (1996) take up this point in trying to locate Gill’s views within the context of contemporary psychoanalytic theory, and Silverman’s essay addresses it in this book.

In the broadest sense, this book is about the ways to conceptualize the nature of the psychoanalytic situation, the analytic interaction, and the nature of motivation. Thus, the chapters range over issues such as the optimal ambience of the analytic interaction; the role of interpretation and insight; the conceptualization, function, and handling of the transference; the significance of the analyst as an old and a new object, the proper mode of analytic listening; and the interactive, intersubjective nature of the therapeutic relationship. Each contributor focuses on one or more of these factors in presenting a view of what facilitates or impedes therapeutic change in psychoanalysis. We believe that this collection of essays offers a representative sampling of many of the key current issues in psychoanalytic theory and practice.

Although Gill himself never presented a fully explicit, systematic theory of all the components of the therapeutic action of psychoanalysis, his writings on the subject provide a model of personality change. The model seems to contain the following propositions:

1. The patient and the analyst are in a constant, ongoing interaction in which each participant influences the other.
2. Treatment is effective to the extent that the analyst, right from the start, is attuned to and interprets both the patient’s explicit references to his or her experience of the relationship and, especially, indirect allusions to the relationship. He stressed, in particular, the analyst’s sense of what the patient senses that the analyst feels toward the patient.
3. He emphasized that these interpretations should focus primarily on the here-and-now transference and address the patient’s resistance to both the awareness of the transference and the resolution of the transference.
4. He stressed that the analyst should be (a) especially alert to link the patient’s experience of the relationship (a phrase Gill used as a synonym for transference) to some aspect of the analyst’s behavior (i.e., to recognize its plausibility) and (b) acutely aware of the interpersonal and intrapsychic meanings to the patient. Gill stressed the transference meanings of the form and content of the interpretation as well as the fact that the analyst made an interpretation. One must keep in mind that interpretation is a form of interaction and that the
analyst must be aware of the “very common phenomenon of the enactment in interpretation of the very issue which is interpreted” (Gill and Hoffman, 1982, p. 91).

5. The ambience of the therapeutic situation is vital.

Thus, it is essential that the analyst believe and convey that the interpretation is offered tentatively and is not presented as a final truth. The analyst must refrain from maintaining a position as the authority who will definitively correct the patient’s distorted perceptions.

II

The five sections in Part II (chapter 2) are devoted to appreciations and reminiscences ranging from the mostly personal to the mostly professional/scientific, drawn from different sources. The first three sections (by Wallerstein, Holzman, and Holt) were presented at a memorial service for Merton that was organized by his widow, Ilse Judas, at the Department of Psychiatry, University of Illinois, February 10, 1995. These eulogies, along with several other moving remembrances of Merton, were published in the Annual of Psychoanalysis (Winer, 1996). Wallerstein’s remarks also appeared as Gill’s official obituary in the International Journal of Psychoanalysis (Wallerstein, 1995).

Because the sections in chapter 2 (as well as the material in chapter 3) were not written specifically for this book, they contain inevitable overlap and repetition of biographical details. We ask the reader’s understanding of this redundancy.

For many years, Gill was a cherished member of the Rapaport-Klein Study Group, a group of friends and colleagues of David Rapaport and George Klein who met annually at the Austen Riggs Center in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. They presented papers and exchanged views on current issues in research and theory relevant to psychoanalysis. The comments by Friedman (in chapter 2) and the essay by Silverman (chapter 9, also published in Psychoanalytic Psychology, 1996) were presented at a memorial tribute to Gill at the June 1995 meeting of the Rapaport-Klein Study Group.

The tributes to Gill from three of his closest friends and colleagues, Robert Holt, Philip Holzman, and Robert Wallerstein, reflect longstanding relationships of mutual affection and respect. Their friendships with Merton, and with one another, date back to their time together at the Menninger Foundation in Topeka, Kansas in the late 1940s and early 1950s. This period can be considered to be the Golden Era of American Ego Psychology, under the leadership of David Rapaport. It included such luminaries, in addition to Holt, Holzman, and Wallerstein, as George
Klein, Margaret Brenman, Lester Luborsky, Benjamin Rubinstein, Roy Schafer, Otto Kernberg, and Sybille Escalona, to name some of the most prominent. With the possible exception of a brief period when Erik Erikson was at the Austen Riggs Center in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, there never has been such a concentration of outstanding psychoanalytic thinkers in one institution. Especially noteworthy is that these psychoanalysts were not content with extending and elaborating Freudian theory but on subjecting it to a most critical reading and analysis and, where possible, on using it as a framework for empirical investigation. It is not surprising that this group produced numerous papers that exposed the limitations and errors in Freudian metapsychology. As Hoffman, Gill's close friend and collaborator in recent years, makes clear, Merton was at the forefront of such critiques. Holt, Holzman, and Wallerstein present portraits of Merton that capture his essential features in a way that will strike a warm and responsive chord in those who had the privilege and good fortune to know him. The material presented by Smith and by Friedman will also convey a good deal about Merton's attitudes and approach to psychoanalysis.

All of the contributors to this volume knew Gill personally. Some had a friendship with him that extended over many decades. Thus, in more informal ways, they are able to comment on some of Gill's personal attitudes and qualities as they influenced the positions he took over the years. In this connection, we should point out that on a few occasions Gill was interviewed in a manner that allowed for an informal, wide-ranging expression of his views (Gill, 1982, 1991; Raymond and Rosbrow-Reich, 1997). We recommend the interested reader read these interviews because they capture directly the nature of his personality, in particular his incisive wit and his hatred of pretension.

We know these eulogies and commentaries do not sufficiently capture the complex, multifaceted aspects of this charismatic man, who was particularly engaging. He was earthy and funny and deeply attached and committed to those he loved and admired. He was biting and brilliant, sensual and seriously intellectual, vibrant and moody. He cared passionately about psychoanalytic issues and devoted himself relentlessly to writing and speaking about his beliefs. With his logical, incisive mind coupled with a sonorous voice and compelling articulate persuasiveness, he commanded great attention and respect in the psychoanalytic community and he attracted a large following of interested students and colleagues.

Part III contains Hoffman's comprehensive overview of Gill's many contributions (chapter 3) followed by a complete bibliography of Gill's writings and a listing of some of his awards (chapter 4). The range and productivity of the man are impressive. Furthermore, as noted above, several of Gill's publications have become classics in the field.

For the most part, the chapters in Part IV can be grouped under sev-
eral related themes or headings: “Natural Science and the Hermeneutic Orientation: The Debate” (chapter 5, Holt; chapter 6, Eagle; chapter 7, Friedman); “Psychoanalysis as a One-Person and a Two-Person Psychology” (chapter 8, Jacobs; chapter 9, Silverman); “Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy: Critical Differences or Blurring of Boundaries?” (chapter 10, Wallerstein; chapter 11, Migone; chapter 12, Gedo); and “Transference” (chapter 13, Kernberg; chapter 14, Wolitzky; chapter 15, Cooper). The editors offer an introductory commentary on each of the chapters.

Nine of the 11 chapters in Part IV are original contributions; the remaining two contributions (Wallerstein’s and Silverman’s) are previously published articles directly relevant to Gill’s work.

III

In concluding this introduction, we wish to note the nature of our relationship to Gill and our interest in undertaking this project. We both got to know Merton over the many years of our attendance at the meetings of the Rapaport-Klein Study Group. It was inspiring to discuss issues of theory and technique with him and to observe his incisive wit and conceptual clarity in his comments on many presentations. In addition, one of us (DLW) had the good fortune of seeing him regularly during the two years (1970 and 1971) he was on the staff of the Research Center for Mental Health, which at the time was part of the Department of Psychology at New York University. For these two years, Merton was a Special NIMH Fellow focusing on methods for the intensive study of audio-recorded psychoanalyses. Although there were obvious ethical issues to be dealt with, Gill was interested in devising methods to study the differential impact of interpretations, which were (or were not) deliberately focused on the transference. In the context of this work, he would play portions of a tape-recorded analysis and a group of us would rate various aspects of the patient’s material. These weekly research meetings afforded me (DLW) an invaluable opportunity to learn how a senior clinician conducted an analysis, an experience that often surpassed what I learned through ordinary supervision. I (DLW) derived enormous benefit from impromptu supervisory sessions with Merton. We discussed clinical and theoretical issues that rarely emerged in my formal control case supervision.

Finally, we note there are a few people who were vitally important in Merton’s personal and professional life whose contributions are not reflected in this volume. First and foremost is Ilse Judas, not only Merton’s loving and devoted wife for many years, but also a person who staunchly supported and contributed to his intellectual endeavors.
Perhaps no person was as essential to Merton's development as a psychoanalytic theorist as his beloved mentor and close friend, David Rapaport. At a memorial meeting devoted to reminiscences about David Rapaport, Merton was movingly evocative in his recall of the importance of this man in his life. Gill appreciated Rapaport's immersion in Jewish humor, his monumental scholarly interests, his disciplined work ethic, his vitality, and his nourishment of colleagues and students in the field, qualities that had a profound impact on Gill. In their summary of Rapaport's contributions to psychoanalysis and psychology, Gill and his coauthor George S. Klein wrote about colleagues "who owe their intellectual momentum to his ideas" (Gill, 1967, p. 31) and Gill clearly was one of these colleagues.

It was at the Menninger Foundation, under the aegis of Rapaport, that Gill found an affinity with many psychologists, including George Klein, Robert Holt, Philip Holzman, Margaret Brenman, and Roy Schafer, among others. One scholarly outcome of these associations was his collaboration with Rapaport and Schafer on the now classic, two-volume text *Diagnostic Psychological Testing* (Rapaport, Gill, and Schafer, 1945–1946).

Margaret Brenman was a close, life-long colleague who collaborated with him on their pioneering studies of hypnosis. Hartvig Dahl, a dedicated psychoanalytic researcher, had a long, fruitful, intellectual dialogue with Merton. We are confident that Gill certainly would acknowledge his personal and intellectual debt to them as well as to others of whom we may not be aware.

We have reserved for separate mention Merton's close, special relationship to Irwin Z. Hoffman, clearly his most important collaborator in the last two decades of his life. Jointly, they developed a coding scheme to evaluate the patients' allusions to the transference and published papers on this topic as well as on the nature of the analytic situation and the transference. It is apparent that Gill was enormously impressed by and influenced by Hoffman's independent contributions, particularly Hoffman's social constructivist (now called dialectical constructivism [Hoffman, 1998]) view of the analytic situation. In his interview with Raymond and Rosbrow-Reich (1997), Gill repeatedly praised Hoffman as his mentor in conceptualizing the nature of the psychoanalytic situation. It is therefore especially fitting that we include in this volume Hoffman's previously published, lucid overview of Gill's contributions (Hoffman, 1985, 1996b).

REFERENCES


PART II

PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL REMINISCENCES
Chapter 2

Merton M. Gill: Reminiscences

Editors’ Introduction: As noted in our introductory chapter, the five sections of this chapter are tributes to Gill, drawn from several sources.

Section One: Merton Max Gill, M.D.

Robert S. Wallerstein

Merton Gill occupied a unique place in my intellectual and emotional scheme of things: as close friend and colleague, as scientific ideal and moral gadfly, and as research mentor and supporter, albeit—despite mutual wishes that would have had it otherwise—we never worked collaboratively in the same setting. I first met Merton in the early 1950s—now more than four decades ago—when I, at the very start of my career as a psychotherapy researcher, was fashioning, together with some colleagues, what evolved into the very massive and ambitious 30-year-long Psychotherapy Research Project of The Menninger Foundation and was applying to the Foundation’s Fund for Research in Psychiatry for my first extramural grant funding. Merton, whom I knew then only through his early writings on psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, which had indeed played a signal role in the conceptual organization of our project, came as one of the site visitors. He was then, at our first meeting, his characteristically incisive, lucid, probing, at times acerbic and uncomfortably probing, but always at the same time, curiously respectful self. After the visit, none of us could be sure of Merton’s intellectual take on the project, but in due course, we were informed that we were awarded the grant that helped launch our project on its long career. It was this show of confidence by Merton in what I could produce that continued to mark and help to sustain my whole future research career, as when years later, in 1966, I left Topeka and my active directorship of the still ongoing research program in order to take up my continuing career in San Francisco, and yet somehow still carry out my commitment to the final clinical accounting of the

work and the results of this psychotherapy research project. That is, my book, *Forty-Two Lives in Treatment*, the chronicle of this 30-year-long research program, was at that time only a dream for the future, and it was Merton's continuing faith that I would not shirk or disappoint this task that not only helped enable me to accomplish it, but required that I do so. Incidentally, it was also Merton who suggested the title of the book, but the account of that amusing vignette would be too long a digression here.

From that first encounter in the early 1950s, Merton and I had become fast friends and intellectual comrades in arms, though he was always also the older one who helped light the conceptual path of our side-by-side pursuit of the science and the research potential of psychoanalysis. I followed all his writings carefully and through his various, at times, drastic, reversals of field, and always learned from them, even when I also, at times, sharply disagreed. It is this ongoing response to Merton's work that prompted me to begin an invited critical appraisal of his 1982 monograph on the *Analysis of Transference*, for a 1984 issue of the journal, *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, with an admiring paragraph locating him and his influence in American psychoanalysis—in my view—as follows:

It has been Merton Gill's fate to be an acknowledged leader in (American) psychoanalysis almost from the beginning of his career. An uncommon percentage of his writings have been almost instantly—and justly—hailed for their critical influence at particular points in the history of analysis in America, in relation both to psychoanalytic clinical practice (and its relation to the derivative dynamic psychotherapies) and to psychoanalytic theory formulation (in the ascendancy and then the decline of ego psychology—the apotheosis of metapsychology). Witness the 1954 paper, "Psychoanalysis and Exploratory Psychotherapy," which (together with Edward Bibring's essay of the same year) more than any other contributions from the various panels and symposia of 1952–1954 set our understanding of the nature of psychoanalysis as a therapy, in all its similarities to and differences from the congeries of dynamic psychotherapies elaborated within its framework. Or consider the 1959 paper coauthored with David Rapaport, "The Points of View and Assumptions of Metapsychology," which so concisely defined and capped the full elaboration of the metapsychological points of view including the co-equal placement among them of the adaptive point of view. Consider the 1963 monograph in the *Psychological Issues* series, *Topography and Systems in Psychoanalytic Theory*, the ultimate extension of the metapsychological theory-building advanced over lifetimes by Hartmann and by Rapaport. Or, consider finally, the 1976 paper, "Metapsychology Is Not Psychology," in which Gill joined the revisionist retreat seeking to dismantle the metapsychological edifice and return psychoanalytic theorizing to an experi-
ence-near focus on just its special or clinical theory—as opposed to the to-be-excised general or metapsychological theory. Curiously, the signal influence of each of these successive landmark contributions has endured despite Gill’s own subsequent turning away from and even disavowing positions that he had so persuasively earlier espoused [pp. 325–326].

And so it has also been with the monograph on the Analysis of Transference, which was the occasion for the critique from which the remarks I have just quoted are drawn and with the series of papers with his Chicago colleague and collaborator, Irwin Hoffman, on the interactional aspects of the psychoanalytic situation as reflections of a psychoanalytic two-body psychology, eventuating in the now comprehensively articulated constructivist perspective in psychoanalysis propounded by Hoffman, and so I am confident it will be with Merton’s final capstone book, Psychoanalysis in Transition, which represents the elaboration of the full evolution of Gill’s psychoanalytic thinking over the half-century of his active scholarship—a book for which I was writing a review for the Journal of the American when his widow, the Chicago psychoanalyst Dr. Ilse Judas, called to notify me of his death.

This lifetime sequence of landmark contributions to our psychoanalytic theoretical and clinical corpus emerged over the course of a professional career lived out in a series of major psychoanalytic centers, from The Menninger Foundation in Topeka, Kansas (1941–48), where Merton received both his psychiatric and psychoanalytic training and coauthored with Margaret Brenman a book on hypnotherapy, and with Rapaport and Schafer the massive two volume Diagnostic Psychological Testing, creating a milestone battery of projective psychological diagnostic tests; then through a five-year sequence (1948–53) at the Austen Riggs Center in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, as part of the brilliant galaxy clustered there in those halcyon days, and at the Yale University Department of Psychiatry and the then-fledgling Western New England Psychoanalytic Society and Institute; followed by a decade of combined private practice and organized psychotherapy research in the San Francisco Bay Area (this from 1953–63) where Merton came fully into his own as psychoanalytic clinician, educator, theorist, and systematic psychotherapy researcher; followed then by six years as a Research Career Professor of Psychiatry at the Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York, and two subsequent years as a special National Institute of Mental Health Fellow at the Research Center for Mental Health at New York University, during which overall span in New York (1963–71) Merton undertook, with a group of collaborators, the systematic microanalytic research study of the entire sequence of hours of an audiotaped and visually observed psychoanalysis that he conducted; and into his finally settled and long career in Chicago.
from 1971 until his death as an NIMH Research Scientist Awardee and as Professor of Psychiatry at the Abraham Lincoln School of Medicine of the University of Illinois in Chicago where both his later theoretical articles (and revisions) and his continuing research inquiries and fruitful partnership with Irwin Hoffman all took place. Across this peripatetic, but always intensely productive, scholarly career, Merton invigorated and challenged the intellectual life of a succession of psychoanalytic communities—Topeka, Western New England, San Francisco, New York, and finally Chicago—and garnered much recognition and many honors. Among the latter were the I. Arthur Marshall Distinguished Alumnus Award of the Menninger School of Psychiatry in 1976; the Heinz Hartmann Award of the New York Psychoanalytic Society in 1992; and, most recently, one of the 1994 Mary S. Sigourney Awards for Outstanding Contributions to Psychoanalysis, announced to him during his period of terminal illness and accepted posthumously for him by Ilse Judas.

Thus a kaleidoscopic but highly condensed account of Merton Gill the psychoanalyst. But what of Merton Gill, the man and my friend? Merton had one of the sharpest minds and sharpest tongues that I have been privileged to know, but the latter was not invoked in personal attack on people, just on ideas. It is often said of such individuals that they do not suffer fools easily; in Merton's case, it was foolishness he did not suffer easily. To me, the paradigm illustration of Merton in action as incisive thinker and intellectual illuminator took place in the early 1970s when I was the first chairman of the American Psychoanalytic Association's newly created Committee on Scientific Activities and Merton and Heinz Kohut were among the initial group of members. Merton and Heinz would tend to sit opposite each other, flanking me, engaged tenaciously in the committee's first task, the clarification, for ourselves, of how we understood our charge and how we conceived of psychoanalysis as science and of psychoanalytic research as an activity. All of us who were party to the provocative fireworks of those discussions have carried ever since an indelible memory of having participated in a very moving intellectual adventure, and this same capacity continued undiminished until Merton's death. In recent years, our chief contact has occurred through Merton's active participation in the semiannual all-day dialogues within the research consortium that I have organized under the aegis of the American Psychoanalytic Association, the Collaborative Analytic Multi-Site Program of process and outcome psychoanalytic therapy research. Though no longer an active hands-on researcher, Merton was always a most attentive and probing and often disconcerting participant. The group had its most recent usual December meeting in New York shortly after Merton's death, and he was sorely missed, both his contribution and his undaunted spirit.

But Merton was also a kindly and even a sentimental man, endearing and lovable through his often matter-of-fact or even, at times, seemingly
gruff demeanor. My wife Judy and I had two occasions of brief travel together in Europe with Merton and his longtime partner Ilse Judas. The first was in Italy in 1969 after the Rome IPA Congress of that year, when we happened to meet in Tuscany and shared some days together with a special highlighted visit to Pisa. The second was in England in 1975 after the London IPA Congress, when we again chanced to meet, this time in York while exploring its magnificent cathedral, and again spent some time together. This was Merton relaxed and carefree and truly happy in ways that were rare to see, and here his gracious, and kindly, and sentimental side could come to the fore.

This was for me an important perspective because, as by now a longtime friend, I had come to know that Merton, with all his accomplishments and all his recognitions and all his honors, also had a difficult and, at times, very painful personal life. He had two earlier marriages that ended unhappily before settling down over the last thirty years with Ilse Judas, whom he had first met when he was a young man in college; she had come to America as a teenage refugee from Hitler and had been taken in and raised by Merton’s family in Milwaukee. Throughout his troubled life, Merton was beset by episodes of deep and incapacitating depression, of total despair for himself and for any future, and yet from each of these, he finally bounced back with undiminished resilience and intensity and commitment to a life of the mind at its fullest that was truly a marvel to behold. I have had the occasion and the opportunity to visit with Merton in each of the opposite extremes of his life. He had also over recent years suffered severe and progressive cardiac disease, which led him to cease accepting professional speaking invitations lest the happenstances of his health not permit him to fulfill the commitment at the appointed time.

My own last visit with Merton took place during his final bout of severe illness covering the span of several months. I was visiting in Chicago this past October and knew that Merton had been ill and hospitalized since the summer, and I arranged to visit him, now back in his home, during that Chicago trip. It was less than two weeks before he succumbed, though I had no inkling at the time that death was so imminent. We tried to speak hopefully about the future, I with my eternal optimism, about his return to his active life and to continued participation with our research consortium. I told him what I have said to very few, that I loved him, and I was moved that he expressed the same in return. The next I heard was the telephone call the day of his death. He was one of the heroes of all of American psychoanalysis, not just a hero of mine. I, along with many others, will always miss him. In addition to his wife Ilse Judas, Merton is survived by five children and stepchildren, five grandchildren, and two brothers.
Section Two: Merton Gill: Teacher, Scholar, Friend

Philip S. Holzman

The obituary notice in The New York Times on November 19, 1994, while respectful, seemed, like all such notices, a bit stony and cold. "Merton Max Gill," it read, "an academic psychoanalyst, died on Sunday at Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center in Chicago. Dr. Gill, who lived in Chicago, was 80 years old." We are obliged here to fill in the color, the warmth, the intensity, the zealousness, the humor, the uninhibited exuberance, the moodiness, and the sheer brilliance of this man who was first and always my teacher, but also my good friend. And in this process we explore what his life meant for us and for the profession he so passionately served and believed in.

My first encounter with Merton occurred in Topeka in 1946. Some people burst upon the scene with an indelible identifying quality. With Groucho, it was his slouchy walk; with FDR, it was his jaunty smile of confidence. With Merton, it was his resonant, baritone voice that commanded immediate attention. To me, as a 24-year-old student at the Menninger Foundation's newly established School of Clinical Psychology and fresh out of the U.S. Army, Merton's was the instant and immediate stentorian voice of authority, without benefit of any military rank—and with what authority he spoke. But at that time, he also inspired fear in me and in many of my fellow students who took a course in hypnosis from him—until one revealing and defining occasion, when he publicly shamed me. You remember that he and Margaret Brenman were then the reigning experts on hypnotherapy. On that day, we were reviewing the literature on hypnosis, and I had read a paper by du Bois Reymond, which Merton asked me to summarize and comment on in class. Now, in the Army, I was in a company with a lieutenant named du Bois, which he pronounced "du Boys." I proceeded to call du Bois Reymond "du Boys Reymond." Merton stopped me and asked in his deepest stentorian tones, "Du Boys? Du Boys?" The class, of course, broke out into gales of laughter, and I broke into a paroxysm of blushing. I tried to explain the source of my error in pronunciation and added something like, "So I made him more American than he really was." Then Merton hinted a smile of understanding, thus revealing to me a side of him I had not suspected until then. At that instant, I remember feeling that he was softer than he had first come across to me.

Indeed, he was softer, and he was also a very funny man. He could tell jokes extremely well. Merton had few peers in his capacity for telling the ethnic Jewish joke, sometimes told completely in fluent Yiddish, and he

Based on a eulogy delivered at a Memorial Service, February 10, 1995, University of Illinois, Department of Psychiatry.
was able to quip and retort spontaneously in ways that highlighted the humor in almost any situation. One quality stands out about his humor. In spite of my initial encounter over du Bois Reymond, his humor was seldom _ad hominem_. He tended not to ridicule people. Rather he ridiculed ideas, positions, and movements, but not people. He was too unyieldingly respectful of people to poke fun at them or their frailties or to retaliate for an attack on him.

It was through the Rapaport-Klein Study Group that I got to know him as a friend and colleague. When David Rapaport was still alive, Merton and I dreamed up the idea of gathering together, once a year, Rapaport’s students and colleagues to discuss the widening range of their ideas. The occasion was to have been Rapaport’s 50th birthday. But when David died at 49 in December of 1960, we, together with George Klein, pushed this idea into a reality. Every June, we would meet in Stockbridge for two days of exhilarating discussions about psychoanalysis or about ideas that were touched by psychoanalytic thought. Merton’s comments inevitably contained his stylistic stamp: they were logical, incisive, and to the point. His points always advanced the discussion, deepened it, and probed its limits, and if there were any slippage in logic on the part of a presenter at these meetings, Merton was usually the first to pounce on the offense, but not the offender, although it might not have seemed that way to some offenders.

To be near Ilse, Merton moved to Chicago in 1971. What a gift to the intellectual life of Chicago’s psychoanalytic community that was! Before his move, he used to be clean-shaven, except for an on-again, off-again moustache. Now he sported a beard that gave him the visage of both Hemingway and Freud, a romancer and a visionary, at times that of a Hebrew prophet, but one with twinkling eye and therefore the humor that those stern prophets did not have. I don’t know who understood the reason for this transformation, for only a very few were privy to the deeper and the darker secrets of his inner self.

Ann and I and Ilse and Merton, at our house or at Ilse’s, shared evenings in lively discussions, sometimes replete with controversy. Ilse showed herself to be a gracious and generous hostess and arranged a number of splendid parties, including a memorable one for Merton’s 60th birthday, which brought together many of his friends from all over the country.

He brought with him from New York his burning interest in the process of analysis. He was among the first to advocate the recording of psychoanalytic sessions in order to be able to read and reread them and, by this exposure to objective scrutiny, to understand the nature of the therapeutic process. In his early efforts while still in New York, he tried experimenting with types of interpretations, “correct” and “incorrect,” to observe their effects on the process. He soon gave up this method as too manipulative and as quixotic and even antithetical to the therapeutic endeavor. After he had settled in Chicago, Merton began an analysis with
Samuel Lipton, one of the unsung giants of our profession, who had an enormous influence on him. From Sam he learned a new perspective on the centrality of the transference in analytic practice.

We met frequently in those days, and we found that we could talk together about psychoanalytic issues quite apart from psychoanalytic gossip. Both of us were sufficiently versed in and awed by received psychoanalytic doctrine yet sufficiently irreverent and defiant of authority that we could question and probe the doctrine, but each of us in our own way. We decided to meet regularly to discuss the process of psychoanalysis and, especially, Merton’s developing ideas about the centrality of the analysis of the transference. The setting for this series of meetings, which lasted until 1977, when I left Chicago, was my house on 57th Street in Hyde Park. We met regularly on Monday evenings. Ann, my wife, prepared lovely dinners, and the three of us dined, sometimes joined by one of our children. The dinners were usually the occasion for discussing politics and our families. Merton spoke with great warmth and respect about his children, and we also shared the latest jokes we had heard.

We rarely spoke about professional issues at the dinner table, but once the two of us retired to the living room, we left the jokes and the outside world behind and immersed ourselves in the recorded psychoanalytic sessions. We poured over them, scrutinizing them for meaning with reference to the relationship that was unfolding between analyst and analysand. The ideas of “resistance to the awareness of the transference” and “resistance to the resolution of the transference” became frequent and familiar as we went through the transcripts. These were heady times, full of immersion in the psychoanalytic dialogue, redolent with the promise of pressing forward to new insights into the complexity of dynamic interactions. In these meetings, Merton developed the ideas, influenced principally by Sam Lipton’s spiritual presence, of first clarifying the extratransferential allusions and experiences in order to understand the transference embedded in them. Next, it was important to raise the transference interactions and fantasies to awareness and, third, to work through the transferential dynamic interplay that had been put on the analytic agenda. This emphasis on what has been called “the here and now” received renewed vigor from Merton’s formulations.

These discussions gave Merton permission for unbridled release of theoretical formulations that were sheltered from public criticism. They were also fun. Merton made the most of them, fashioning a set of rating scales to give some objective frame to the interpretative gloss on the psychoanalytic transcripts. Our scientific temperaments, however, were not completely congruent. I was no match for Merton’s brilliance in penetrating to the essence of the meaning of the psychoanalytic transactions and his articulateness in formulating the dramatic plot that unfolded in the therapeutic interview. He was dazzling, and I learned so much from him that
I scarcely know how to enumerate the many ways he influenced my own therapeutic practice. My own temperament called for a modicum of empiricism to season the theory. Often, at the end of an evening of poring over a transcript, I would urge him to institute a study to find out what difference it made to focus on the resistance to the recognition of the transference, the early heightening of the relationship issues, and the other innovations he formulated. Do these interventions make detectable differences in outcome, however one wanted to measure that event? Merton resisted that call for testing.

We skirmished over the need for extraanalytic verifications and proofs. I would raise Einstein’s objection to psychoanalysis that there is always the nagging and persistent doubt about the validity of Freud’s bold intellectual constructions. “It is the old song,” Einstein wrote, “of the indispensability and at the same time the untrustworthiness of introspections.”

But Merton would brush that aside. His concern was with the unfolding interpersonal dynamics that illuminated the present and the past, yet he never disparaged my empirical thrust.

I often thought that, if I had stayed in Chicago, we might have instituted such a study because, although Merton was a man who defended his positions vigorously, he was never closed to alternatives. I have seen him many times change his mind when the weight of evidence suggested to him that his previous position may have been wrong. This was the case when he changed his mind about his classic 1958 paper with Rapaport on “The Points of View and Assumptions of Metapsychology” and his 1963 monograph on Topography and Systems in Psychoanalytic Theory. His immersion in the labyrinthine complexities of metapsychology and of the psychoanalytic process represented a major part of his intellectual world. The 1958 paper was a tour de force of integration, a masterful and concise summary of the sprawling metapsychology, creatively distilled into fewer than 15 pages. The monograph explored the concepts of consciousness, preconscious, and unconscious as systems and their relation to the quality of mental contents and to the issue of the viability of a separate topographic point of view. Then, after having taken these ideas about as far as he could (and perhaps almost anyone could), he became convinced that this kind of metapsychological exploration was not only a dead end, but was the wrong path for psychoanalysis to take. He shifted his position and became highly critical of his previous ideas. When George Klein died, Merton and I produced, in George’s memory, Psychology Versus Metapsychology, a book that was a commodious critique of metapsychology. Merton’s loyalty was to probing for truth, and if he understood that he was wrong, he would change.

---

1 Letter to O. Lobbenberg from A. Einstein, February 12, 1950, in Archives of Hebrew University, Archive # 60341. Permission granted by the Albert Einstein Archives, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
accordingly. I consider this quality a defining strength of Merton's intellect.

His efforts were hardy, persistent, and truly heroic, and many was the time that they were accomplished while he was suffering from one of his physical ailments or one of his crippling depressions, from which it surely seemed to him that he might never emerge. Still, during these black periods, his intellect was as rapier sharp as always, and somehow, miraculously, he was able to concentrate on the intellectual topic at hand. Even at the end of his life, his body already subdued by the disease that would soon completely claim him, he produced another major book on his work, one that is sure to be as influential as his previous works. I marvel at the strength, durability, and toughness of his mind.

One of his major characteristics was directness. One could count on him to be plain spoken and candid, in that deep voice that went directly to the point. During one of the seders at Ilse's house, he interpolated an intellectual argument he felt compelled to take up with us. There is a prayer in which the reader praises and thanks God for many things, including having chosen the Jews above all other people. Merton paused after reading this passage about the chosen people and, in his orotund, clear voice—indicating that he was always reflecting on what he was saying—announced to us, “That phrase always made me uncomfortable. I think I can do without it.”

He also did not tolerate well exhibitionistic displays of self-promotion and immodesty. It may be said here that he wore his own considerable pride discreetly and with noteworthy dignity. About one person, however, he could almost allow a public acknowledgement of worship, and that was David Rapaport, whom he truly loved and respected. I remember walking through the Stockbridge cemetery with him to visit David’s, George Klein’s, and Bob Knight’s graves. We stopped beside David’s grave and glanced at the unique black stone on which were carved the words, “Mi Chomocha,” meaning, “Who can be compared with you?” This phrase is the beginning of the Hebrew, “compared with you in the entire universe, O Lord.” He turned to me and said, perhaps with more admiration than derision, “Some chutzpa! Hah?”

When I left Chicago, I left behind those memorable Monday evenings with Mert. Although Merton and I continued to see each other at the Rapaport-Klein Meetings and at other meetings, the regularity of our social and scientific encounters diminished.

Now he is gone from our midst. He lived four score years. His was a long life. He accomplished much for the profession he loved. I knew him as a good and wise friend and as an exquisite teacher. It is a mournful occasion to say farewell to such a man, but this sad emotion is mixed with gratitude for his long life, part of which he shared with us. We can rejoice that so many of us were touched by his presence. Although he knew the Hebrew liturgy and could recite the ritual prayers, he shunned religion,