

8/9/67

Dear Jerry,

If the treatises you sent me represent the psychiatric science, I can think of nothing better to say than my genuine belief that they have set that science back a generation. One need only read this "science" to be grateful if this is the result.

For years to come this will be used by conny lawyers. I can just imagine one with the proper blend of skill and unscrupulousness performing before a not-to-bright jury.

My spe ch in Ohio was very well received. It made the editors think. From the record I'd say that 100% decided on butter. They were free in their appraisal of this as their best convention and its most interesting and provocative speech -~~xx~~ and their subsequent suppression of all mention of the speech and the books, including the new one. The AP wasted little time in proving how right I was, dedicating five long articles to it.

The TV things are like the "science", save that NEC's is from a CIA link and by a man with MI and DJ background while CBS's is its own kind of specialized dishonesty. The executive producer read Whitewash in the limited edition, tried to return the generally-circulated one on the statement they'd not do such a show, then did exactly that, save for the doctrine, using no criticisms by any critic not in my work, which was not once mentioned, no criticism as CBS' that also was not earlier mine, without mentioning my name, and attributed to others what I first did and exposed that they could not attribute to my competitors. Example, Alvarez and the unsteady camera meaning the early shot: Whitewash 47-2; Whitewash 2, about 213-4. It is difficult to anticipate the special dishonesties those paid well enough to be imaginative will create for special occasions. It is not difficult to imagine the worthwhile things that could come from such minds if there was money to pay for it.

My best to Keye and the others. My third book, PHOTOGRAPHIC WHITEWASH: SUPPRESSED KENNEDY ASSASSINATION PICTURES, is out. Parallax will soon be bringing out my New Orleans book (text only). And I work still.

Sincerely,

Harold Reisberg

June 17, 1967

Dear Harold,

In spite of my warnings, my friend Chaplin went ahead and promoted the exchange of views among psychologists which resulted in the enclosed articles (please keep for your files if you wish--perhaps you have already seen it.) Parts of it are pretty incredible thin air speculation. I have marked some places that interested me. (Note only one of the profs. covers himself.)

I know you're busy so don't give me your comments until you have a free moment--but I would be interested in them when you get time. I hope you will be on the show just announced for Sun the 25th on the critics of the assassination. What is the ~~xxx~~ story on that? Another "official" clamping on of the lid-- I hope not.

Kaye sends her best. Hope you are continuing to have good luck in finding the right publisher and that your Ohio speech went well.

Sincerely,


Jerry Felt

LEE HARVEY OSWALD
IN FREUDIAN, ADLERIAN, AND JUNGIAN VIEWS

The following is a quasi-symposium in which three interpretations of Lee Harvey Oswald, the presumed assassin of President Kennedy, are presented together with a commentary. The "symposium" took its origin in a short paper by Dr. Joseph Katz, clinical psychologist and senior member of the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis and faculty member of its Training Institute. This paper appeared originally in the *Psychoanalytic Review*. It occasioned the second paper in the present sequence which subsequently appeared in the same journal. Its principal author, Dr. Heinz L. Ansbacher, has for some time been interested in Adlerian theory and is past president of the American Society of Adlerian Psychology. This second paper was followed by a reply by Dr. Katz.

> This exchange led Dr. J. P. Chaplin, senior author of *Systems and Theories of Psychology*, a standard text in this field, to suggest that it would be highly desirable for general comparative and didactic purposes to have an interpretation of the Oswald case also from the third classical, the Jungian point of view. Thus he approached Dr. Ira Progoff, clinical psychologist and noted Jungian author, who then very kindly agreed to prepare such an interpretation for this Journal.

We are now very pleased to present below all three interpretations, followed by the review and commentary of Dr. Chaplin.

NBC?

PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S ASSASSINATION:
FREUDIAN COMMENTS¹

JOSEPH KATZ

New York, N. Y.

RELIGIOUS IMPLICATIONS

The universal shock waves following President Kennedy's assassination are seen to duplicate the original social repercussions felt after the murder of Christ and the hypothesized murder of Moses. Freud was not the only original thinker to speculate on Moses-murder as being responsible for the ageless guilt of the Jews. To read the book of *Exodus* is to wonder how Moses, in spite of his undenied genius, could have possibly escaped an untimely and violent death in view of the ironfisted ruthlessness with which he put the many thousands of non-believers to death. Following the murders, we may see the following pattern of similar mass reaction:

1. Universal shock and profound mourning; everything stops.
2. Mass guilt; everyone eulogizes the slain leader; his virtues are magnified and his vices nullified.

3. The need to resurrect the fallen leader, to pay penance, make restitution, to make him immortal and thereby negate or deny the fatal deed; hence the use of special mourning prayers and rituals, the building of altars, temples, and the use of religious symbols like the Holy Cross. Instead of ancient altars, today we substitute the contemporary eternal flame, the hasty naming of airports, buildings, the setting up of foundations and libraries, all bearing John F. Kennedy's name.

4. The almost too quick recovery of the mourning masses back to normal. This very fast forgetting lends a certain note of hypocrisy to the initial period of intense mourning and perhaps exposes the unconscious satisfaction in the fulfillment of the original death wish towards the leader. Thus, President Johnson, just two days after the assassination, had family pictures taken at the White House. Business was as usual and the stock market quickly soared to new

¹Reprinted from the *Psychoanalytic Review*, 1964, 51(4), 121-124, through the courtesy of the author, the editors and the publisher, the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis, Inc., New York, N. Y. Subtitle added by the present editor.

heights. Occasional anger was even worded and contempt expressed towards the fallen leader that he was so omnipotent and erring in judgment as to cast aside precautions and permit himself to be killed; (i.e., he dies like any other mortal). However, on the whole, to speak against any murdered leader is almost sacrilegious. The tendency to forget the death completely and quickly is countered by the forced remembrances of formal anniversary ceremonies and religious ritual.

DEARTH OF DREAMS AFTER ASSASSINATION

There appears to have been a surprising dearth of dreams pertaining to the assassination as reported by analysts and analysands alike, following the President's death. Eight psychoanalysts were polled informally for both analysand and personal dreams and only a handful of a total of seven dreams were remembered during the three week period following the assassination. Only two of the analysts remembered their own dreams; three of the analysts had no dreams at all to present, either of their own or of their analysands. These dreams ranged from affectless denial of the disturbing effect of the assassination to most frightening nightmares where the dreamer identified directly with the President and became himself the victim of sudden assault, mutilation, and death. It is possible that viewing the events on television for three full days following the assassination, including the actual shooting of Oswald, served as a substitute for dreaming and the release of accumulated anxiety. It may also have been simply too painful and threatening to remember dreams of the shocking events and so a temporary period of self-induced dream deprivation developed until the ego could handle the hot material.

ACUTE DREAM RESPONSES AND HOMOSEXUAL PROBLEMS

From the scanty data available, it seems that people with deep homosexual problems, both male and female, had the most disturbing dreams of all, or at least, were able to remember and report them comparatively well. Possibly they were more fully able to identify with both assassin and victim. Their impulses to kill off the hated father were the most intense, and correspondingly, their fears of being themselves killed in turn, the most acute, to the point of reaching paranoid proportions. Hence the need to emasculate themselves to varying degrees in order not to risk the irrational anxieties of kill

or be killed. If the fatal step of indulging in heterosexual activity is taken, then the penalty for the crime of symbolic incest is the fit punishment of death—the ultimate in self-destruction. This brings us to Oswald, the alleged assassin.

SPECULATIONS ON OSWALD'S UNCONSCIOUS

We will never know what went on in the mind of Oswald, but from the bits of evidence on hand we can try to come close to the target on at least some points. We know that Oswald was the youngest and probably the most indulged son and that he never knew his father. It is strange that the mother is estranged from Oswald's wife and brothers and she seems to bask in the light of the nefarious publicity which has been heaped upon her. There is a vociferously loyal defense of her son which is understandably maternal but which really says, "My son could do no wrong," and serves as a defense of herself in that she did nothing terrible in bringing up her son and making him into what he became.

One is most easily tempted to say that Oswald figuratively killed off his father—the father who let him down, as perhaps, he may have imagined Kennedy had let the nation down in some manner. But the figure of the mother looms too large to be dismissed, for it was she who was the dominating and perhaps overwhelming figure in her son's life. The speculation is therefore made that in Kennedy, Oswald saw his mother and had to rid himself finally of her. In his warped way of thinking, Oswald may have seen Kennedy as identical to his mother; in being self-centered, opportunistic, two-faced and untrustworthy. As his mother used him, so he imagined Kennedy using the nation; as his mother literally led her own son down the path of destruction, so he saw the President leading the nation perfidiously down the path to similar destruction.

Oswald's period of disturbed, disorganized behavior for the past few years shows his desperate attempts to shake his mother by renouncing his country, fleeing to Russia, and marrying a Russian woman. In the end, however, he had to return to the Motherland and to mother herself. In becoming a father, Oswald's panic perhaps became more serious; he just could not rid himself of mother and the "crimes" committed with her. The dangers confronting him became more and more real and threatening. He tried to kill General Walker but could not quite pull it off. Now he felt more desperate than ever; like the hunted beast, it was now kill or be killed. Oswald probably

stalked and killed the President, but the act did nothing to solve or alleviate his inner turmoil. The panic became greater than ever and now he made sure that he himself would be killed for his crime, by fleeing and then shooting dead another authority—a policeman.

Once apprehended, Oswald denied the killing and stubbornly maintained his innocence. This is not unlike the omnipotent wishing of the child of two to five years who straightfacedly denies a misdeed when caught red handed and who really believes that he did not do it. The emotions of such a child or of such a disturbed adult as Oswald can be so grandiose and unreal that he operates in accordance with the formula that what he wishes or wills will be so. If Oswald wished the mightiest leader in the world dead and if this became so, then certainly he could wish for his own innocence and non-implication of the deed, and surely this will be so and so believed.

The final question remains: if Oswald really wanted to kill his mother, why did he not do so? Why did he kill President Kennedy instead? To kill his mother was to commit symbolically the very act which all his energies were directed in denying; namely that he had sexually violated her in his youth, in their travels alone, or that he had committed any primal sins. To kill his mother was too much akin to penetrating her sexually and this he could not face at any cost. In denying the killing of the President he was also denying that he had ever committed any forbidden offense against his mother. President Kennedy thereby became the substitute target for the outlet of all of Oswald's pent-up fury and libido, meant really for his mother. The homosexual does similarly when he assaults a male love object or uses him sexually.

Would that Oswald had been asexual or overtly homosexual, rather than to have murdered the President. He tried desperately to be a heterosexual man and a father but here, too, his grandiosity prevented him from recognizing his limitations or exercising adequate judgment and control.

Can anyone ever
be in a state of
anything?

LEE HARVEY OSWALD:
AN ADLERIAN INTERPRETATION^{1 2}

HEINZ L. ANSBACHER, ROWENA R. ANSBACHER, DAVID SHIVERICK
AND KATHLEEN SHIVERICK

University of Vermont

This paper is essentially an Adlerian reply to the brief interpretation of the case of Lee Harvey Oswald by Joseph Katz (5). We shall accept, as did Katz, that Oswald indeed assassinated President Kennedy.

Katz starts by making some observations to the importance of which we can agree. He notes that Oswald was the youngest and probably the most indulged son, and that his mother was vain and self-centered. At the time of the assassination she was estranged from her entire family, yet she seemed "to bask in the light of the nefarious publicity which has been heaped upon her." And in her vociferously loyal defense of her son she actually protests "that she did nothing terrible in bringing up her son."

But our way parts from that of Katz when he makes his main point in what he calls "speculation on Oswald's unconscious." We quote:

The speculation is therefore made that in Kennedy, Oswald saw his mother and had to rid himself finally of her . . . Oswald's period of disturbed, disorganized behavior for the past few years shows his desperate attempts to shake his mother by renouncing his country, fleeing to Russia, and marrying a Russian woman . . . [However,] the final question remains: if Oswald really wanted to kill his mother, why did he not do so? Why did he kill President Kennedy instead? To kill his mother was to commit symbolically the very act which all his energies were directed in denying; namely that he had sexually violated her in his youth . . . To kill his mother was too much akin to penetrating her sexually . . . President Kennedy thereby became the substitute target for the outlet of all of Oswald's pent-up fury and libido, meant really for his mother (5, pp. 123-124).

In the Adlerian interpretation, which is offered below, Oswald's mother is also considered to be of central importance, but not as a libidinal object. Whereas Katz views the situation in terms of

¹Reprinted from the *Psychoanalytic Review*, 1966, 53(3), 55-66, through the courtesy of the authors, the editors and the publisher, the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis, Inc., New York, N. Y. This applies also to the Reply by Joseph Katz, reprinted from the same issue, pp. 66-68.

²The general information used here has been taken from *Life*, Feb. 21, 1964, pp. 68a-80; *New York Times*, December 4, 1963, p. 18; Dec 8, 1963, p. 45; Dec. 10, 1963, p. 31; Nov. 24, 1964, p. 33; and *Time*, Nov. 29, 1963, p. 27. All these sources are from soon after the deed, and the paper was completed in the summer of 1965.

Freudian dynamics, particularly the Oedipus complex, the Adlerian perspective emphasizes the key role the mother must play in preparing her child for a life of cooperation and contribution. Her importance for the child is how she does or does not fulfill her function. According to Adler, "The mother must give the child his first experience of a trustworthy fellow being; and she must then be prepared to spread this trust and friendship until it includes the whole of our human society" (1, p. 373). With regard to crime specifically Adler says:

It is easy to see that in unhappy or broken marriages the cooperative spirit is not being properly developed . . . [Later, the criminal] does not know there is social interest in the world, having never experienced it. He has a hostile attitude toward other people; his look is hostile and he regards everybody as an enemy; he has never been able to find appreciation (1, pp. 418-419).

The task of the Adlerian interpretation is to show how, starting life with a mother who did not develop in her child trust, friendship, and social interest, Lee Harvey Oswald developed a faulty life style which makes his crime quite understandable.³

NEGLECT AND INFERIORITY FEELING

What parental guidance Lee received had to come from his mother, as his father had died two months before his birth. Lee was born on October 18, 1939, in New Orleans. There was an older brother of five, and a step-brother of seven by the mother's previous marriage. Apparently Mrs. Oswald stayed at home with her children the first two years of Lee's life, but then went to work as a saleswoman, and placed the two older boys in a Lutheran home for children. When Lee was three, he also was placed there. During the year he was home alone Mrs. Oswald had to leave him much of the time in the care of others. Two years later, his mother married for a third time and Lee was taken out of the "home" to relocate again in unfamiliar surroundings. All too soon his newly acquired step-father and mother were heading for a divorce which was granted in 1948, four years after their marriage. This constant neglect, turmoil, and instability

³Since this paper was written the very informative account of the Oswald case by Thornley has come to our attention. It includes an introduction by Albert Ellis who arrives at an interpretation similar to the one presented here in a number of points, as, altogether there is a considerable area of agreement between his Rational Psychotherapy and Adler's Individual Psychology. Ellis speaks of Oswald's grandiosity and considers it "to some degree the other side of the coin of his underlying feelings of weakness, and . . . partially a defense against these feelings" (3, p. 11).

in his early years provided the background for the development of a faulty style of life based on little, if any, experience or example of good interpersonal relations or social interest. Certainly it can be stated that Lee's mother never, especially during the crucial formative years, gave him a bedrock of security, of regularity, or of order; more importantly, she neglected to give him "the completest possible experience of human fellowship, and then to widen it into a life attitude towards others" (1, p. 372).

However, this neglect did not impel Lee to develop the particular style of life he assumed. "It is not the child's experiences which dictate his actions; it is the conclusions which he draws from his experiences" (1, p. 209). Lee created for himself a hostile style of life which gave a mistaken meaning to all aspects of living. Another child placed in the same circumstances may not have done so, as was the case with his step-brothers who apparently developed normally. Lee's interpretation emphasized the negative side of existence. For him the world was hostile, and unworthy of trust. Men were not fellow beings with whom one can cooperate and strive together to solve the problems of everyday living; but rather, they were his enemies who must be forced into recognizing Lee Harvey Oswald.

Every person at times has feelings of inferiority. If, however, the individual comes from a sphere of insecurity and neglect, then it is quite likely that his feelings of inferiority will be more acute. This logic follows quite naturally, if one considers that the neglected child does not have the chance to appreciate the fact that it is through cooperation that a person's life problems can be solved. With no example to demonstrate this principle, a child could conclude that he is alone and helpless to struggle with the problems confronting him.

In Lee's case there was an accumulation of factors conducive to the development of increased inferiority feelings. He was of slight build. He had no father, and had a step-father for only a short time. The innumerable changes of home, school, and neighborhood constantly put him at the disadvantage of being a newcomer and outsider. Lee also suffered from an impairment of his hearing, when he had to have a mastoid operation. He was left alone a lot. His fourth-grade teacher said: "Lee left an empty home in the morning, went home to an empty home for lunch, and returned to an empty home at night." Most probably he also felt the pinch of economic inferiority: "I saw my mother as a worker, always with less than we could use."

Greater inferiority feelings in themselves are likely to make for greater self-centeredness and to impair social interest. In the case of Lee such a development had been facilitated by his mother failing to provide training in a positive attitude toward human relations and cooperation. Lee's resulting lack of social interest becomes evident throughout his life. One manifestation of this was his lack of readiness for contacts; he never seemed to enjoy the company of others for its own sake, as one would in engaging in friendly conversations, or in attending a squadron party (when he was in the marines). When friends gave gifts for his baby, he could not accept them, as he was incapable of joining in any give and take; he impugned the friends' motives as humiliating charity, apparently being unable to see how others could get positive pleasure in giving and sharing.

PAMPERED LIFE STYLE

Adler pointed out three situations likely to be overburdening to the child, which would lead to poor opinions of himself and of the world, and predispose to a neurotic, self-centered life style. These were: being neglected or unwanted, being pampered, and having organ inferiorities. Viewing the situation objectively, Mrs. Oswald certainly neglected Lee as shown above. However, it is also sure that she pampered him, at least in the sense that she let him have his own way and excused him from responsibility for his actions. Whenever Lee came into conflict with others, or with law and order, she consistently released him from any obligation to comply with what was expected of him; denied any wrong on his part, and/or placed the blame for his behavior squarely on others. When he was a youngster she took his word against that of an adult complaining about his holding up the phone and using profanity on their party line. She once condoned his truancy by saying, "He used to come home and say, 'I already know all the stuff they're teaching. Why bother with that?' Then he'd go off to the library." When he was investigated by the Children's Court of New York City, at 13, Mrs. Oswald refused to take him to a psychiatric clinic, as recommended; she kept saying he wasn't any problem, and she didn't understand what the fuss was all about. She told the probation officer: "My son is not going to report to you . . . He's given his word that it is not going to happen again. I was not going to have a boy of that age and caliber going to a probation officer." Much later, when he couldn't find a job she claimed it was all because the papers had blown up the matter of his

defection. And last of all, she placed the blame for his final deed on the security officers who had not held her son under complete surveillance!

One can see how this attitude would lead Lee to regard himself as always right, or at least having special privileges, whereas the others were wrong and to blame. He was different, deserving of something better. It was Lee Oswald against the others.

After his death, his wife said of him: "I always tried to point out to him that he was a man like any others who were around us. But he simply could not understand that."

Thus, rules were for the others, not for him. When, at 16, he turned out for football, he refused to sprint with the other boys, as was required after practice. He said that this was a free country and he didn't have to run if he didn't want to—though this cost him his chance to play.

Lee was the youngest child in a family of three, with two older step-brothers, although from his sixth year on he was in effect the "only" child. The effect of birth order has always been stressed by Adlerians, and Adler proposed, "The second largest proportion of problem children comes from among the youngest, because all the family spoils them . . . Sometimes a youngest child . . . wishes to excel in everything, be unlimited and unique" (1, p. 381). This, as we have seen, would certainly apply to Oswald.

In summary, one may say that, although neglected, Lee also grew up in a situation which was at least to some extent pampering. In any event, he had acquired a pampered life style, meaning that he considered himself entitled to special privileges and not bound to rules by which others must abide, and that he expected to receive without feeling any obligation to contribute on his part.

WITHDRAWAL, DEFIANCE AND POWER STRIVING

School was not a particularly pleasant encounter for Lee. Throughout elementary school in Fort Worth, he was described as a child of average intelligence and low achievement. He did not enter school until he was seven, which may account for the fact that he was taller than his classmates. At first he showed some leadership and popularity, though often through attention-getting tricks and rough-tough behavior. He was a very lively, wiggly boy, always on the move, indicating a high degree of activity. Yet he was unwilling to join in games. Such high activity level and low degree of social

interest portend, according to Adler, the development of criminal tendencies.

In 1952, his mother and Lee moved to New York City to be near his step-brother. The picture of Lee at school now changed in that he was said to be shorter than his classmates and often taunted because of his Southern drawl and because he wore blue-jeans. On a questionnaire Lee completed, he could not list a single close friend. One of his teachers thought him to be a belligerent, hostile boy who would lash out at anyone who offended him. Throughout school, there is the recurring theme of the boy being alone, and hints of his hostile feelings. Later, in the Marines, he is said to have been a hot-head but that he could not hold his own in fist fights, possibly because of his small stature.

Serious problems became evident to everybody except his mother, who was away from home working while Lee played hooky for 47 days out of four months. His probation officer noted at the time that Lee spent much of his day alone, watching television. Neighbors stated that he played alone, quite often with toy guns. Lee's mother had to appear in court with him. He was sent to the Youth House for Boys in the Bronx for a month. There a psychiatric examination disclosed that he had fantasies involving violence.

Apparently he safeguarded himself from the new school situation by "excluding" others still further and increasingly "seeking distance," behaviors which Adler saw as characteristic of the neurotic. Lee sought the "dream world" of television where he would be unopposed and could identify with those who came out on top.

On the questionnaire mentioned above, he gave his favorite pastimes as reading and football—the former where he could be alone, in his dream world, and the latter, where he could "fight" and win victories. Yet even in connection with football he was not willing to do what was expected of him, as we have seen.

Throughout his life he had an interest in guns. In junior high school he asked another boy whether his toy pistol looked real, and when the boy replied that it did not, Lee said he could get a real one from a pawn shop but would have to steal it. While he was in the Marine Corps he was court-martialed for failing to register a personal weapon, a pistol. One of the few fields into which Oswald put real effort was marksmanship, and he became a fairly good shot with a rifle in the Marines. We may assume that for him a gun was the means to be above others, to gain superiority by absolute power over others.

MARXISM

While at high school in New Orleans, Oswald started reading Marx, an experience which he described as "like a very religious person opening the Bible for the first time." In studying Marx, he stated, he was searching for a key to his environment. This remark indicates that to him, with his pampered life style, and unable to relate himself to others on an equal footing, life was an insoluble puzzle.

The concepts expressed by Marx, though essentially belonging to sociology, have much relevance to a man who is struggling with his relation to society. Erich Fromm (4) stresses the humanistic ideas which can be gleaned from the early writings of the philosopher-economist. However, in all probability, Oswald read and grasped primarily the deterministic, materialistic side of Marx, as these concepts are far better known and could more easily explain to Oswald the enigmas and disappointments of his life.

Where Marx wrote of the exploitation of the proletariat by capitalism, Oswald could see himself being used by a society which did not want him. While he could not see that his lack of satisfactions could possibly come from his own non-contributing, he accepted that this lack must be the fault of others, the society which was exploiting him. Thus Marx gave a larger meaning to Oswald's own rebellious feelings. The overthrow of capitalistic societies as espoused by Marxist Russia and China probably found Oswald very receptive and captivated his imagination.

Apparently he saw in Marx—as later in Russia—a utopia for himself, a personal "goal of perfection." In Marx's writings he found a way in which he could strive to be better than, or superior to, his fellowmen. The particular concretized manner by which he could act was also prescribed by Marx—revolution.

Thus Oswald's plan to go to Russia developed. It was in this connection that he directed his efforts to a genuine accomplishment—perhaps his only one besides marksmanship. This was teaching himself Russian while in the Marines. He failed the qualifying test for military language school, but this did not deter him. He studied all on his own—and very successfully. He read a Russian newspaper for which he sent, along with serious books on history and government. By the time he got to Russia he was said to speak the language fluently, if not grammatically. Even after returning to the United States, he insisted on speaking Russian at home.

GRANDIOSITY

In each mind there is the conception of a goal or ideal to get beyond the present state and to overcome the present deficiencies and difficulties by postulating a concrete goal for the future. By means of this concrete goal, the individual can think and feel himself superior to the difficulties of the present because he has in his mind his success of the future (1, pp. 99-100).

Oswald's goal was to be superior to everyone. One way of striving toward this goal was to depreciate those who were actually his superiors. As a marine, his second court-martial was for using provocative words toward an officer. A former officer recalled Oswald as a trouble-maker and officer-baiter; he enjoyed stumping an officer with a question about some obscure situation, just to show off his own superior knowledge.

Another way of striving for superiority was to break further away from reality in boosting his self-esteem with a sham of self-importance and grandiosity. He set himself unrealistically high goals: he got himself admitted to a small institution for higher learning in Switzerland and considered becoming a writer. After returning from Russia, he planned a book criticizing Soviet life. When he made the statement in Russia that he was defecting from his native land, he was interviewed, had his picture taken, and was given the opportunity for the first time in his life to feel important. He liked to talk big. His letter to the Secretary of the Navy, complaining of his dishonorable discharge, was written in the grand, superior style: "I shall employ all means to right this gross mistake."

His wife said, after the assassination: "He wanted in any way, whether good or bad, to do something that would make him outstanding, that he would be known in history . . . He had a 'sick imagination.' He engaged in fantasies about his future greatness, such as predicting that in 20 years he would be 'prime minister.'" After his arrest he said he knew his rights, he could handle the matter himself: he, Lee Oswald, against the whole country was big enough to handle this thing alone.

Adler has pointed out, "when a person seeks to concretize his goal by wanting to domineer over others . . . No one could posit such a goal for himself without being forced to come into conflict with the coercion of evolution, to violate reality" (1, p. 108). This conflict with social reality was consistently demonstrated in Oswald's life. Its greatest irony came when, having come to Moscow, he was refused citizenship. He must have felt extremely disappointed that the epitome of his aspirations was thus denied him. Even if Russia had

← when was this - a result of her FBI experience?

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accepted him, however, we can assume that Oswald would not have been all right, but rather would have pursued his goal of grandiosity. For, according to Adler, social interest is the criterion for normality, and Oswald, as we have seen had no real social interest. While his application for Russian citizenship was still pending, an American reporter in Moscow, at the time, appropriately commented, "He (Oswald) talked in terms of capitalists and exploiters . . . But I did not perceive what the essential thing was . . . that this guy would be unhappy anywhere." He did in fact become as little satisfied in Russia as he had been in school and in the Marines.

THE EXOGENOUS FACTOR

Adler saw life as the meeting of three tasks: the relationship to other people, work, and love-and-marriage. Oswald had failed in all three. Looking down on people, being unfriendly and aloof, he felt himself above society, and not a part of it. His wife said of him: *when?* > "Everybody hated him, even in Russia." After his return to the United States, everyone who became acquainted with him eventually rejected him because of his unmannerly, hostile, rigidly opinionated ways.

As for work, he never held a job for any length of time, and the work he tried was relatively unskilled.

Regarding marriage, he married an attractive Russian pharmacist whom he had met while a sheet-metal worker in a factory in Minsk and whom he brought with him to the United States. But the marriage had come close to the breaking point, marked by inordinate demands of Oswald and callous indifference to his wife and children. One time he refused to pay the hospital bill for his young child who had been taken there in an emergency by friends; and he would not enable his wife to get the dental care she needed. At times he beat her.

As he found himself increasingly checkmated, he bought himself a rifle, in the spring of 1963. As it had been in the past, the possession of a gun was still his stake in greatness, giving him power over life and death. He directed his wife to take a photograph of him, holding in one hand a Trotskyite newspaper in front of his chest, in the other hand his rifle, and a pistol in his hip-pocket. It was truly a portrait of a triumphant, conquering revolutionary. It was as though he posed this picture the way he wanted to be remembered.

That summer in New Orleans he had borrowed from the library

numerous books on current affairs, including one on the assassination of Huey Long and a biography of President Kennedy.

He offered to work with an anti-Castro Cuban exile group, but was rejected. He then distributed pro-Castro leaflets, got into a fight with the anti-Castroites, and was fined for disturbing the peace. Cornered, and up against it, he saw no other way out than to apply again for a visa to Russia, traveling to Mexico in the attempt. When this was not granted, no way seemed open. He became more secretive and isolated; he hid behind an assumed name.

In this situation he took actual recourse to his new rifle: He told his wife that he shot at General Walker.

And then came the great opportunity for him to perform a deed that would make his name known the world over and in history. And it was an opportunity to use his cherished rifle, and one of the real skills he had mastered. It was an incredible coincidence that the route of the President led past Oswald's new job location.

Accepting the account of events as published in the newspapers and magazines, there could have been no possibility of any long-term plan on Oswald's part to kill President Kennedy. Oswald got his job at the Texas School Book Depository through the suggestion of a neighbor of the friend with whom his wife and child were staying. This was in the middle of October, 1963. But it was not until November 19 that the Dallas papers announced that the President's motorcade would pass directly by the Book Depository, and not until the next day, two days before the event, that they gave the time—the middle of Oswald's lunch hour! Knowing of his complete lack of social ties—the absence of any national allegiance, his friendlessness, his indifference even to his wife and children—we can understand that in his desperate situation this opportunity was a truly irresistible temptation.

CONCLUDING CONSIDERATION

The Freudian approach as exemplified by Katz selects but a small part of the actual life events and uses these for lavish inferences from the theory, in order to illuminate not the rest of the life of the person, but that which is presumably behind it all, an assumed unconscious. This unconscious is not concerned with the real, present, new, life problems of the individual, but with some other assumed problems carried over from infancy. Actual present behavior, when it is taken into account, is not accepted as a sample which could become in-

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creasingly meaningful if understood in its larger context, but as a symbolic action which, again, derives its significance not from anything out in the open, but from something assumed and hidden.

The Adlerian approach, on the other hand, is concerned with a life as it is actually lived and every detail of it, including the goals and aspirations of a person. In the year before his last, Adler wrote: "The field of investigation of Individual Psychology is the relationship, carried out in actions, of a peculiarly stylized individual to problems of the environment" (2, p. 244).

The reader may ask, what have we added to the existing newspaper and magazine accounts? Where have we gone beyond common knowledge, common sense? We should answer that we have drawn from a theory which makes inferences only sparingly and close to actual behavior. We have employed the concepts of striving for superiority, striving for personal power, social interest and its lack, overburdening environmental factors, birth-order position, the determining role of the individual's interpretation of his experiences, inferiority feelings and self-centeredness, the pampering situation and the pampered life style, predisposition and the exogenous factor, and others which may not necessarily have become explicit. Theory was invoked only to establish a larger context for the reported facts and thus to show them in a fuller significance, to facilitate fitting all the various, partly incomprehensible and sometimes apparently contradictory actions into a meaningful whole. Such organization of the data so as to enable one to discern the individual's self-consistent and unique life style, is also the contribution of the theory. If the outcome is so readily acceptable this perhaps finds its explanation in these words from Robert W. White: "Adler's ideas have gone into the stream of contemporary thought and have become the accepted clinical common sense of our time" (6, p. 4).

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No ref to
Adler's
Report, RNL
available
Twice of article

Adler's work is not
reported in the
report

REPLY

There are those who would declare taboo even the offering of a hypothesis of possible Oedipal inclinations—quite harmless as a thought. The authors of the above paper then proceed to solemnly proclaim the non-existence of the Oedipus, or even that an “assumed unconscious” could be a determinant of any import to present day behavior. I wonder that a brief speculation (presented as such in my paper on President Kennedy’s assassination) should arouse such ire and indignation. Hypothesis is, after all, merely speculation which remains to be proven or disproven. Unfortunately, this is not possible without a live and willing subject. How can the Ansbachers and the Shivericks be so sure of the non-existence of a crucial Oedipal conflict in Oswald if they never saw the man and a full case study in depth is precluded for all? If Oswald were alive the possible Oedipal nature of his inner turmoil might very well be revealed; this could be reliably determined by means of depth interviews and from the productions of phantasies, dreams, and projective tests. The foregoing article is an illuminating description of the real familial and social adversities which beset Oswald, but is not necessarily a conclusive explanation of the stark irrationality of the foul deed. The paper, in itself, proves or disproves nothing and cannot possibly supply all of the answers, from the limited data available. It is not every day that an individual murders a President and so we must never cease the probe for irrational motives as well, which might throw more light upon the insane deed.

The authors’ real bone of contention seems to be directed against Freud himself and his contributions and for this they must marshal considerably more persuasive argumentation and proof than they present here. The concurrence of the “rational” approach of Albert Ellis with their views can hardly be offered as a serious source of validation. The problem might also be posed as to why so many learned people see red when confronted with any Oedipal intimations or prefer to simply close their eyes tightly lest they be too readily contaminated or show some semblance of recognition, however faint, which might expose—you know what! Perhaps they do protest too much. Why the authors’ taboo against just looking—or thinking? Even the Bible sports its repeated tales of incest with equanimity, for all to see. Our most common curse words, off-color jokes and racial prejudices abound with incest. Our colleagues ignore the bounteous literature and mythology of all eras and cultures, past and

present, which would lend some measure of credence to Oedipal strivings and for which Freud can hardly be held responsible. How does one dismiss current Oedipal productions from children, schizophrenics, and from the dreams of so-called 'normal' individuals?⁴ How do we explain the irrationality of certain puberty rites and religious ritual? Do we have all the determinants to the flood of irrational impulses, fears and guilts which beset us all?

One cannot so blithely ignore the millennia of psychological adaptation which was vital to the survival of all species. Have all our energies been righteously absorbed in the "successful" enforcement of the Oedipal taboo so that mass murder (and individual murder as in the case of Oswald) goes unchecked? Just as there are many rational determinants which explain war, unless we seek, understand and control the ever powerful forces of the unconscious, the tragic course of war may grind on unceasingly, even though we offer all of the "correct" rational causes and cures for its being. Should we not explore any hypothesis which may provide better understanding of man's dilemma before it is too late?

JOSEPH KATZ

⁴The connection I drew between the assassination and Oswald's mother may not be so far-fetched. Consider the following recent news item, more than three years after the assassination:

The New York newspapers of April 8, 1966, report a former mental patient going berserk and slashing his mother to death. The police report stated that before the fatal attack, the 29-year-old son was with his mother and began to mumble something about the death of President Kennedy. He demanded of the mother: "Answer me yes or no." She replied gently, "Yes, son," but he jumped up, grabbed and shattered a water glass, and attacked her, slashing her on the face and neck.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LEE HARVEY OSWALD:
A JUNGIAN APPROACH

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When an extraordinary event like the assassination of a president occurs, there is great stimulation to enlarge the dimensions of our psychological understanding. We must ask ourselves more than the analytical questions of why the event occurred. We must ask in various contexts what its meaning is, and whether there are any larger implications of life that we may infer from the event.

A psychiatric approach by itself can make relatively small contribution to answering these questions. It can describe a few diagnostic concepts and relate these to the assassination, implying, but by no means proving, a causal connection. The larger questions remain, and can be comprehended only when the event of the assassination has been viewed from more than one direction. From the psychological side the most promising line of approach would seem to be to reconstruct the life of the killer as far as possible, and to look there for clues to the meaning of the event.

Attempts have been made to understand the psychology of Lee Oswald from a general psychiatric point of view (11), from a specifically psychoanalytical point of view (4), and from an Adlerian point of view (1). Without wishing to contradict these authorities, I should like to describe the development of Oswald's life, as it seems to me, as a preparation for an inquiry into the meaning and the implications of the event. What follows, then, is an interpretation of the life and personality of Lee Harvey Oswald as it led to the act of the assassination. Since I have no other source of information, I am accepting the current consensus of opinion as stated in *The Warren Report* that Oswald alone and without accomplices carried out the murder of President Kennedy. If that assumption is eventually found to be incorrect, some, but not all, of my interpretations would have to be altered.

ABSENCE OF FATHER FIGURE

Oswald's life began under a cloud because of the fact that his father had died before he was born. He had no affirmative relation-

ship with a father figure of any kind, for when his mother remarried, that also ended in failure. The time he spent at the age of three in a Lutheran children's home must also have increased the psychological gap left by the lack of family identification.

We can only speculate as to the psychological effect of the absence of a father figure. In principle, the only safe approach is to assume that the psychological role of the father figure is different for each individual since it varies with each situation. In Oswald's case, since he never knew his physical father as a person there was a gap in his experience of his own origin. In a patrilineal culture like Western civilization the primary role of the father is as a connection to the generations that have gone before. In these terms, the specific personal traits of the father are not primary. They may be important, but only with respect to the specific social situation. The father is the link with history, with a specific national or racial group. He is the young man's biological link to the continuity of life.

This transpersonal aspect of the father, the archetypal father, sets the basis for the young man's first feelings of his own identity and of his own value. He may eventually reject this and substitute a new conception of his identity and value, carrying through the so-called "killing of the father." The active presence of a father image is essential, however, to provide the young man with a sense of himself in order that the growth process can get under way. Then it can proceed through the early years of life and into that time in late adolescence when it can legitimately be overthrown and a new sense of identity achieved.

What is the psychological effect of having no father image at all? In such a situation a vacuum is set up at the very point where it is most essential for a clear and strongly felt image to be present. With no father image, all that has been said about the necessity of a transpersonal father image is then thrown into reverse. There is no feeling of connection to the continuity of the human species, or to a specific nation or race, and there is no larger sense of belonging. Without it in the essential early years, there is nothing to provide a sense of identity or a feeling of personal worth as may be derived from the awareness of one's ancestry. The feeling of this racial resource in some degree is essential. Without it, the young man's attempt to form himself as an individual is at a great disadvantage. Lee Oswald began his life with this lack, and he sought in nonconscious ways to overcome and balance it.

MOTHER IMAGE

The mother image played a quite different role in Oswald's life. Because of the nature of the family structure in modern American society, it has become common for the mother to have the greater personal effect upon the growing boy. In most situations, this is because the greater portion of the boy's time is spent with the mother while the father is away at work, and because the mother controls the day-to-day patterns of living. In Oswald's case, the effect of the mother was exaggerated because she was the only parent with whom he had a direct personal connection.

In such a circumstance the quality of the mother becomes of primary importance. Her traits are bound to seep into the personality of the young man, to be absorbed by him at the nonconscious levels of his psyche, and to form the main lines of his style of life. This, however, is a *derivative* style of life. It is not his own. It is rather taken over from another person, from his mother, and it is then lived out *as though* it were his own. The young man enacts the ideas and values of his mother, mistaking them for his own goals of life. I have elsewhere described this as the *environmental self*, indicating that this image of one's identity which is derived from the social environs of the person is in contrast to the seed self from which authentic growth proceeds (6, pp. 170-181; see also 9).

In such a social situation where the young man absorbs the traits of his mother, the personality of the mother is naturally of great importance. It appears that Oswald's growth as a person was greatly hindered in this respect as well. To say this is not to imply a judgment of Mrs. Oswald. Her life, widowed as she was at a relatively early age, was filled with hardships that were beyond her control. The journalistic accounts of her which include one paperback book (10) describe her however as the possessor of several difficult traits.

Like many women who feel the pressures of economic insecurity, she developed an artificial hardness, a false facade of masculinity, with which to shield herself from society. She was a hard worker and a rigid organizer. Her home has been described as being not only spotlessly clean but meticulously arranged. "A place for everything and everything in its place." She was full of opinions, but she stated them as though they were facts. If something went wrong, it was not she who was the cause of the difficulty. Some one else had brought it about. There is considerable indication that she was, especially in the earlier years of Oswald's life, a very difficult person

with whom to live. But he seems to have adapted himself to his situation of being her son with an attitude that was remarkably philosophic and loyal. A probation officer who interviewed Oswald when he was thirteen years of age quotes him as saying in answer to a question about his mother, "Well, I've got to live with her. I guess I love her" (11, p. 358).

ADOLESCENT REBIRTH

The young Oswald endured many hardships as a consequence of being the child of this erratic widow. Mrs. Oswald married a third time (Lee had been the son of her second husband) and this marriage ended in divorce. The family never remained at any abode for a long period of time. Changes in school increased the boy's tendency toward isolation so that he tended to be without friends, a loner. All these misfortunes of his situation built in Oswald, as might be expected, a marked feeling of inferiority; and as might equally be expected, these feelings of inferiority and misfortune were compensated by fanciful wishes of achieving power in the world. A psychiatrist who examined him at age thirteen reported that he had a vivid fantasy life with daydreams that tended toward omnipotence.

There is indication that in his early teens Oswald entered a period of social withdrawal. On the one hand, this is an aspect of the enforced loneliness that resulted from the nonsocial background of his family. It must also be seen, however, as a stage in a psychological process by which the adolescent was reaching out toward a context of meaning that would make his life livable. The characteristic of his life with his mother was its inadequacy and persistent frustration. It was this from which he withdrew into a world of television and personal fantasy.

Seen in retrospect, this withdrawal may seem to be an expression of Oswald's neurotic isolationism. It is, however, also a normal and valid part of the adolescent period during which the young person is reaching toward a new meaning for his life. Where shall he find it? In order for a new meaning to be found, the old context of life must be rejected and overcome. When the old view of life dies, a new view can be established and a new style of personality brought to birth. This is the psychological pattern of death and rebirth that is the prototype of initiation to maturity as it occurs throughout

human society. In modern times, if an adolescent has a favorable childhood it is necessary for him to live through a period during which he rejects it and finally destroys it. Only when he has killed it off can he start to build a life that is truly his own. This new life will be based upon a new truth, not one that he has taken over from his parents, but one that he himself has discovered and experienced.

For all adolescents this cycle of rejection and discovery is necessary. For Oswald because of the emotional poverty of his environment it was especially urgent. For him it meant a period of great psychological turbulence. Although the tests he was given at this time indicated a strong intelligence, he was recurrently in trouble with the authorities during this time. His withdrawal from outer reality was part of this. It increased the confusion of his existence, but it was inherent in the growth process of personality by which the individual spontaneously reaches toward a meaning larger than that which his old life has provided.

A natural cycle must be lived through in this phase of development. The energies of the psyche retreat. They go back, away from outer reality; and they go down beneath consciousness where they activate non-rational types of perception. This is the withdrawal phase. Its psychological purpose is to draw from the depth of the psyche the materials and insights that will make possible a new integration of personality based upon a new context of meaning. Everything depends upon whether this new context of meaning is actually found. If it is, it rounds off the cycle of initiation, and the individual can take his next step in life and emerge into a larger, more satisfying phase of experience. If not, the painful period of withdrawal must be continued, entered into again and again and deepened with increasing psychological turmoil, until, if ever, it is resolved.

MARX AND RUSSIA

For a person in Oswald's situation, an easy resolution of this constant condition of inner tension was not possible. The closest he came to finding a means of resolving it was at age sixteen when he had his first taste of the writings of Karl Marx. This experience, Oswald said, was like, "a very religious man opening the bible for the first time." At first sight it may seem that he was attracted to Marxism because of his resentment of the economic poverty of his life. The indication, however, is that Oswald was seeking to com-

pensate for the meagerness of his personal existence by finding a truly encompassing utopian view of the world. There even seems to have been a time when he tried to take a step beyond Marxism in a spiritual direction. He enrolled in the college at Churwalden, Switzerland where the course of study was based upon the writings of Albert Schweitzer. Oswald was actually accepted by this institution when he was twenty years of age, but for some reason he never attended it. Instead he went to Russia and applied for Russian citizenship.

This gesture on Oswald's part must be interpreted symbolically. Often an act in one's waking life is the equivalent of a dream in that it expresses in symbolic form something that is required to fill a deep need of the personality. Oswald had not yet found the new meaning which would complete his initiation to life. He therefore needed to carry through the cycle of destroying his old environmental values in order to make possible the establishment of a new, more satisfying structure of belief. This first step is implicit in his desire to renounce his American citizenship. And the second step, the rebirth to a new self embodied in a new social identity was contained in his desire to embrace Sovietism and become a Russian citizen.

Here the sad fate of Oswald becomes poignant and ironic. He failed in his attempt at initiation, for the Russians rejected him. Nonetheless, he persisted in seeking to make his new perception of truth a reality. He remained in Russia even though he retained the status of an alien. He supported himself by working in a factory. It was during this period that Oswald married.

MARRIAGE AND REJECTION

His marriage to Marina, a young pharmacist, must also be understood as an aspect of his search for meaning. The marriage seems indeed to have been based upon a significant misconception. Oswald thought of Marina idealistically as a dedicated Communist. Later when he returned to America with her and discovered that she had a normal love of material pleasures he was disillusioned. The disenchantment and confusion which he experienced is a clear indication that something more than banal sexuality was involved in the marriage. In Oswald's choice of Marina we see another instance of the psychological fact that a man's idealistic love for woman is a projection of an inner image which he senses in his depths, but has

not yet been able to live in the actuality of his existence. Not being able to embody it in himself, he projects his still un-lived image upon the woman. She thus embodies his ideal and he idealizes her, often in the most illusionary manner. Everyone else can see the woman as she is in actuality, but to the man involved she is the embodiment of his image of a new self. Love of this kind must be blind, for only in this blindness, or unconsciousness, can it carry out the psychologically necessary step of projecting the image of the new self, the self not yet lived, on to the idealized woman.

Oswald saw in Marina a person who embodied the new truth which he had not yet been able to make real in his life since the Russian government would not accept him. She was for him, in the language of C. G. Jung, a "soul image" an "anima figure," a person who represented in the outer world a still un-lived intimation of reality drawn from the depth of the psyche (3, p. 11ff.). When his projection was checked out against the actualities and pressures of married life, Oswald discovered that Marina was not all the dedicated utopian he had envisioned. She was what anyone could have seen and told him, a flesh and blood woman with materialist desires and a will of her own.

It is significant that on the night before the assassination Oswald went to Marina with an offer to give her the washing machine which she had wanted him to buy. But now she rejected it. She was living with a friend and no longer needed the household appliance since she did not intend to return to him. This rejection was an event of multiple frustration for Oswald. It was a frustration on the personal and sexual levels which he experienced as a husband in a marriage that was breaking. But if we remember that to Oswald Marina was a symbol of his quest for new meaning in a Marxian society, we will perceive its larger overtones. Not only had he been rejected by the Russian Government, thus being prevented from achieving a new social identity; but he had also been rejected by the one individual who embodied for him a personal relation to his ideal. The feeling of frustration must have been intense, and the pain and passion of the anger that accompanied it must have been equally strong.

VIOLENCE

We come then to the question of violence as an outcome of the intense frustration of the individual's quest for meaning and personal identity. What had been frustrated in Oswald was his attempt to

be reborn, to become a new person, to carry through the initiation that would bring a new self to birth. But this is no ordinary frustration. It is of a totally different dimension than the type of frustration in which a person is prevented from achieving or receiving something he has desired. This is a stoppage of the life process itself. At such a point in an individual's existence the possibilities of psychological growth have come to a dead end. One has come to an unbridgeable impasse, or at least so it seems while the passion and the anger are still high. At that moment the person feels that he is consigned by destiny forever to remain encumbered by his old self, that he will never be freed from it. In Oswald's case it meant that he would never be able to fulfill the visions of utopian meaning and personal power with which he had compensated for the low feelings of inferiority he had carried since his early years.

What kind of act is vast enough to give expression and release to so fundamental a frustration? An act of great, destructive violence. But such an act must come in a particular form because it has a symbolic role to enact. It must fulfill that phase of the initiation cycle in which the death of the old environmental self is brought about.

An act of killing is necessary, but the killing may come in various forms. If it is turned outward as overt violence, it will take the form of the murder of a person who represents the old self. If it is turned inward, it will become the murder of oneself, either an actual suicide or as a slow gnawing self-destruction. It may also, if it is turned outward but does not reach an intensity of overt violence, vent itself gradually and insidiously as the daily psychological destruction of another person quietly performed.

It may well be that the impasse of frustration to which Oswald had been brought that night could have released itself in any of these forms. Perhaps the physical act of violence need not have happened. The moment might have passed without the cup of death having to be drunk. But then an intangible factor of chance, or meaning, entered the scene. "It was," as Ansbacher et al. point out, "an incredible coincidence that the route of the President led past Oswald's new job location" (1, p. 64). The constellation of events could not possibly have been planned by the conscious mind. Public information of the President's route was given only a few days before the event, and Oswald happened by the purest coincidence to work there.

SYNCHRONICITY

Now we must note a peculiar fact that cannot easily be explained. Two disparate lines of events suddenly met and become congruent with one another, thus bringing about a new event of world-shaking impact. On the outer level, unrelated to the life of Oswald, President Kennedy in Washington was making decisions which would lead him to be in Dallas passing beneath the window where Oswald worked, just in the midst of Oswald's lunch hour. On the inner level, Oswald had reached a state of frustration in his psychological quest for meaning that could only be released in an act of violence strong enough to bring death either to his old environmental self or to some *symbolic representation of it*. Ever since his reading of Marx, America, his mother country, had been the symbol of his old self to Oswald. He had sought to get rid of it when he went to Russia, and now the highest symbol of that country was passing beneath his window. The inner events of his life had come together with a line of outer events, and the synchronicity of the two—to use Jung's phrase (2)—had an uncanny correspondence.

Who can say what was actually in Oswald's mind at the fateful moment? In retrospect it seems clear that ever since the previous evening, he must have been in the grip of something that seized him and lifted him with an intensity even greater than that generated by his personal frustrations. It drew him out of himself and held him taut in mid air, finally to fling him as a sword pointed at the world. In that single strange, crazed moment it was as though he was not Lee Harvey Oswald but Sir Modred, the ill-fated bastard born of incest, the outcast of society consigned by destiny to kill the hero, King Arthur, and to be killed in return (5).

How strange an event that was! It was indeed unthinkable by the rational mind. It seemed when it happened to be unfathomable; and this vast, dark, abyssmal quality still covers the event whenever the intellect attempts to understand what took place there. No description of the factors involved quite accounts for the enormity of what transpired. Something in its aura gives it a strange quality, as though it were not altogether a natural event. Yet it can hardly be classified as supernatural. Perhaps subnatural. No, not that either.

Now we are reaching toward something that is hard to say. There is a dimension of human existence in which it seems that the individual who acts is not the true agent directing his action. He

acts, he is the one who presses the trigger, but it is as though something beyond him is doing it. This is the dimension of myth, when the mythic makes itself real in the actuality of life, and fills itself out with specific persons and places, flesh and blood. The events of personal life lead up to the mythic event, and provide the contents and circumstances out of which it comes to pass. But they themselves are not the event. Something that is more than personal, causes the event to happen. Thus the continuity of events within the life of Lee Harvey Oswald, his questing and his repeated frustration, all the inner continuity of his life which is what comprises the *psychology* of the person, drew him to the time and place at which the shooting occurred. But the psychology of Lee Harvey Oswald was not all that was required to make the dreadful event come to pass. It was necessary also that a parallel chain of events bring John F. Kennedy to the spot in Dallas at the time when the shooting would be possible.

THE MYTHIC EVENT

That these two chains of events which had no causal relationship to each other should meet so conveniently may well be considered to be chance. But the impulse to action at the given moment was clearly more than chance. Nonetheless, it cannot be understood merely as an act of arbitrary personal decision; nor can it be understood as an event that was psychologically determined. Some additional factor was present, and it was this factor that crystallized the situation, giving shape and form to its component events.

What is this formative factor? It is mercurial, too intangible to be analytically described; but it is real and its effects are visible. A myth is not only an outwardly false belief about something. It may also be the quintessence of truth, at once the core and the context of meaning, providing both the formative factor that crystallizes a situation and also its significance, its meaning in the larger continuity of life.

From the study of history we can discern definite patterns in which such mythic events tend to appear. One of these patterns is the situation in which the highest, most beloved, most noble, heroic figure in a society is brought low through a foul blow dealt by an ignoble, despised member of the community who dies as a result of his act. An instance of such a mythic event in the history of Western civilization is the killing of King Arthur by Sir Modred. This seems indeed to be a prototype of the double death of Kennedy and Oswald.

It is as though they were both caught up and victimized by a transpersonal patterning of events, an active principle which uncannily crossed the boundaries of time and causality, and brought a mythic event into the actuality of history. This should enable us to realize that myths are enacted not only in the dark past of primordial history but also in the midst of us in the modern world, even on our television screens.

Myths of this active, formative type break into the world from time to time for reasons that are not yet clear to us. It seems, however, that mythic events tend to occur at critical points in human history when the directions and styles of life are being reformed. Thus mythic events lie at the heart of the founding of the great religions. They have occurred also with major consequences at those crucial moments when the great civilizations were being reshaped and given their historic thrust. If mythic events are beginning to transpire in modern times, that may well be the sign that we are arriving at a new turning point in history, and that the course of human events is about to be reshaped in fundamental ways (7, chap. 6; see also 8).

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COMMENTARY ON THREE OSWALD INTERPRETATIONS

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Every attempt to reconstruct the motives of a man who cannot speak for himself necessarily rests on a combination of factual background evidence and careful conjecture. It was in this spirit that the Warren Commission included in its report a study of those events of familial and other relationships which they felt may have influenced the development of Lee Harvey Oswald. Because of the widespread publicity given to the alleged assassin's background following the death of President Kennedy, the world knows Oswald as a young man whose meager life was one of continuous deprivation, failure, and frustration. But many millions of the world's peoples lead such lives through bitter necessity, yet do not become assassins and murderers. The fundamental question remains: What unique combination of personal elements led Oswald to discharge his frustration in the tragic crime at Dallas? This is the question to which the psychologists in the preceding interpretations address themselves, each according to his special point of view. To the historian and student of systematic psychology the interpretations are of special interest, since they represent the three classic schools of depth psychology, the psychoanalytic, the Adlerian, and the Jungian.

CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS FACTORS

Reduced to its essence Dr. Katz' psychoanalytic account is a frankly speculative attempt to reconstruct Oswald's unconscious. He interprets the assassination as a kind of Oedipal tableau, a matricide which could never have been carried out directly, since it would have involved an act toward the mother "too much akin to penetrating her sexually"—an impulse which in psychoanalytic theory is the heritage of every male child. By implication Oswald had never been able to resolve his Oedipus complex because of the absence of a father or father surrogate, and the forbidding personality of his mother. Thus the President of the United States became the victim of the primal sacrifice.

The Ansbacher-Shiverick interpretation places the motivation for the murder on Oswald's hostile style of life and severe inferiority

feelings which culminated in the killing of the President as an act of incredible enormity which in the distorted perception of the perpetrator would suddenly transform him into a powerful and grandiose figure. In one brief moment he would make up for years of frustration and defeat. The world would at last recognize Lee Harvey Oswald. In contrast to the Katz interpretation which centers on unconscious factors, the Ansbacher-Shiverick account is based on rational or ego psychology.

Dr. Progoff's interpretation also emphasizes Oswald's life-long frustration and search for meaning. Unable to resolve his rejection of his old way of life because he felt defeated in his search for a new integration in his abortive flight to Russia and his unhappy marriage to Marina, he exploded into a great act of violence to emerge out of the chrysalis of nothingness into a new life. The death of Kennedy thus symbolized the death of Oswald's old self. In the Progoff account both conscious and unconscious factors are emphasized.

How the three schools stand on this issue is well illustrated by the different interpretations of the events in Oswald's life relating to Russia. For the Freudian, Oswald's voyage to Russia is "to return to the Motherland and to mother herself," clearly an interpretation resorting to the unconscious. In the Adlerian view, Russia, preceded by the study of Marx's writings, is a concretization of Oswald's goal of perfection, in the sign of which he applied himself to the study of Russian to such an extent that he could speak it fluently. Certainly rational and cognitive factors are largely involved here. According to the Jungian, the renunciation of American citizenship and the acceptance into the Soviet environment represented Oswald's search into the depth of his psyche for a new context of meaning. This change is interpreted symbolically as the destruction of his old values and initiation into a new social identity, involving both conscious and unconscious factors.

LARGER MEANING

It might be noted that the Katz and Progoff interpretations also look toward the larger meaning of the act. Dr. Katz likens the assassination to the murder of Christ and the hypothesized murder of Moses. He points to the mass reactions of guilt and mourning, the hasty establishment of memorial symbols, the quick repression of the original guilt reaction by a business-as-usual reaction. Dr. Progoff sees the act as a formative mythic drama breaking into the

world at what may turn out to be a crucial point in our history, as great myths have tended to spring into existence at similar periods in the past. Both interpreters are to be commended for attempting the difficult task of a larger interpretation of the meaning of the event. Dr. Progoff's interpretation should be read in the light of his paper on "The Integrity of Life and Death" referred to in his article.

It is to be regretted that the Ansbachers and Shivericks did not attempt a more general interpretation of the significance of the event. It would seem entirely possible to do this by invoking Adler's concern with the development of social interest in mankind and the rejection of power for its own sake. We live in an age dedicated to unlimited power, and we have yet to master violence. In this sense Oswald was a symbol of man's general failure to employ the rational principles advocated by Adler and more recently by Fromm in order to create a sane society.

OBJECTIVE FACTORS

None of the interpretations presented here is in serious disagreement with the known events of Oswald's life. Indeed, both the Progoff and Ansbacher-Shiverick accounts follow closely the chain of frustrating circumstances that plagued Oswald from the moment of birth. Both interpretations find common ground in assuming that the act of assassination was a violent compensatory gesture which was the culmination of constant and unsuccessful attempts to achieve compensation through a hostile style of life. Katz, too, finds that frustration lies at the heart of Oswald's act, but with a difference. He narrows the explosive act of killing itself down to sexual frustration, even though he implicitly admits that Oswald's background may be important in understanding his development.

All interpreters emphasize Oswald's unfortunate childhood, lacking as he did a father and finding himself the inescapable victim of a rigid, opinionated and neglectful mother with whom he was in constant conflict even to the point of overt physical violence, as numerous witnesses before the Warren Commission have testified (3, pp. 487, 489; 4, pp. 147, 149, 226, 301, 372). Again there is disagreement in the significance to be assigned to Oswald's mother by the several interpreters. Katz' interpretation is in terms of the classical Freudian Oedipal drama, while the Ansbachers and Shivericks stress Adler's emphasis on the mother as the most important figure in developing social interest in the child with failure in Oswald's

case. Progoff finds the mother a deeply significant factor in hindering Oswald's normal development, since lacking a father figure he tended to identify with her to his detriment.

If, as Katz suggests, Oswald's aggression was directed against Kennedy as a substitute mother figure, it leaves unexplained the long history of his overt aggression toward a variety of other people who could not possibly all be mother symbols, including his brother John Oswald (1, p. 647), the wife of his half-brother, John Pic (4, p. 372), his schoolmates (1, p. 383), his wife, Marina (4, p. 293), a Marine sergeant (1, p. 386), General Walker (1, p. 404) and officer Tippit. Indeed, his sadistic treatment of Marina to the point where she was driven to contemplate suicide and his sexual inadequacy (4, p. 291), have, surprisingly, been neglected by Katz who might have made a stronger psychoanalytic interpretation by including them.

More generally, in studying the report of the Warren Commission and the testimony of those who knew Oswald at various stages in his life, this reviewer could not help but be overwhelmed by the massive sense of frustration and failure that this human being must have suffered. He not only felt that "his mother never gave a damn for him" (3, p. 487), but in an interview with the social worker at the Youth House in New York City he also expressed the feeling that nobody in the world cared about him and he in turn cared about no one (3, p. 499). In Russia, when he was refused citizenship, he tells us in his "Historic Diary" that "my fondest dreams are shattered." When he asked Ella Germain, a Russian Jewess, to marry him, she laughed at him. "I am stunned. She snickers at my awkwardness in turning to go. I am too stunned to think" (2, p. 101). A few entries later (2, p. 103) he admits that he married Marina only to spite Ella.

It would be supererogation to repeat the endless list of Oswald's failures in school, at work, in his political, social and marital life—indeed, even in killing the President in that he did not live to enjoy the limelight into which he had thrust himself. The only evidence that this reviewer could find of genuine pleasure in Oswald's life was in his relationships with children. All witnesses agree that he enjoyed playing with little children and tried after his own fashion to be a good father to his own (1, pp. 416, 721; 4, pp. 252-253). Perhaps, pathetically, in his own dim way he was seeking compensation for his own tragic childhood.

SUMMARY

Utilizing the conclusions drawn by the Warren Commission and the supplementary material in the *Hearings before the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy*, this commentator is of the opinion that the Adlerian interpretation best fits the known facts of the case, with the Jungian interpretation running a close second. Neither interpretation makes full use of the materials available, but it must be admitted that had this been done, the case would have been strengthened, not weakened.

The present writer fails to find any objective evidence in the sources mentioned to support the hypothesis that Oswald's act was symbolic of a desire to satisfy a frustrated libido towards the mother. However, in fairness to the Freudian position, it must be acknowledged that direct evidence could only come from Oswald's unconscious, a source no longer available to anyone.

For the systematic psychologist, the three interpretations provide excellent capsule reflections of the original points of view which they represent. Freud looked to the past for the explanation of the present, and utilized unconscious determinants. Adler, who emphasized goals, conscious as well as unconscious, looked to the present and the future. For Freud, the individual is inevitably a victim of his past. For Adler, the individual is striving toward a future goal which can be changed. Finally, Jung who was strongly drawn toward polarities emphasized both deeply buried unconscious factors as determinants of behavior but at the same time recognized that man is constantly striving and searching for meaning in the present and the future. The interpretations presented here are valid exemplifications of the parent theories.

In conclusion, the interpretations presented in this symposium should constitute a valuable addition to the literature on "the most tragic crime of our century."

REFERENCES

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