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**Books**

**PSYCHOANALYSIS GONE WRONG?**

*My Life in Theory* by Leo Rangell (New York: Other Press, 2004, 363 pp); reviewed by Douglas Kirsner

Where has psychoanalysis gone wrong? What has happened that so eroded public confidence in a field? These are major concerns throughout Leo Rangell's noteworthy book that spans the six decades thus far of a remarkably rich psychoanalytic life. He has been right at the centre of many controversies that have spanned the last psychoanalytic century. Born in 1913 in New York, he published this summation, reflection and memoir in early 2004, only a few months after his ninetieth birthday. With a number of books and some 450 articles, Rangell has made significant contributions across a wide range of issues from clinical child psychoanalysis through ego psychology to the psychoanalysis of public opinion. He was in the eye of the storm politically, locally in Los Angeles, nationally in the US and internationally in the International Psychoanalytic Association (IPA), having been three times president of the Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Society, twice President of the American Psychoanalytic Association and twice president of the IPA.

This book situates Rangell's theoretical work within its psychoanalytic socio-political context. It reflects a dialectic that encapsulates the way people and ideas influence and condition each other. It sums up his general approach to psychoanalysis as an overarching systematic method that is based upon theory. This theory is not dogma but is open to criticism and development in a scientific way. Too often psychoanalytic institutions have inhibited creativity instead of promoting it. The book interweaves events, people and ideas in a fascinating development spanning the 60 years from the 1940s when Rangell trained as a psychoanalyst.

Rangell proposes as his abiding linchpin the goal of a 'unitary psychoanalysis' to be distinguished from the pluralistic approach so widespread

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today. 'I consider the current multiplicity of theories to be at the heart of the decline of psychoanalysis as an inspirational intellectual discipline, if not of its pragmatic and sociologic problems.' He considered the subtitle of 'Splits and Comings Together' as indicative of the travails of psychoanalytic organizational life. Psychoanalysts are not immune from the psychopathology of groups. This psychopathology, according to Rangell, has not only resulted in recurrent splits but more latterly in 'rapprochements and reunions' which may now share 'the same determinants as the divisions that they purport to heal'. The book highlights the coexistence of reciprocal relationships between the scientific method Freud extended to the life of the mind and 'the subjective, interpersonal factors that influence individuals and groups' (pp. xi–xii). Ideas are shaped by people who support and also inhibit them. The book records Rangell's thoughts and experiences as a participant–observer in the development of theory as he experienced it based upon his firsthand knowledge of most of the contributors. This is an important book of testimony of psychoanalytic history that is full of reflection and detail with much hitherto unknown material that helps understand crucial events.

Rangell considers psychoanalysis to be in disarray today as a result of a pluralistic approach that has not led to growth. As Freud's work developed, the new context of the relationships surrounding those discoveries emerged as a factor in itself. In Rangell's view, psychoanalytic theory develops continually as a cumulative whole. Alternative schools and theories offer competitive approaches to treatment while public confidence in the field is low. It is important to keep in mind that Rangell is advocating an open-minded approach based on evidence and argument rather than the dogmatism and authoritarianism of yester-year administered by fiat.

In Rangell's view new paths leading to alternative developments within mainstream psychoanalysis came when theoretical and interpersonal factors intertwined at three nodal geographic points – Topeka (George Klein and his group) in the 1950s; Los Angeles, with the Kleinian development in the 1960s; and the Rome IPA congress and the Chicago Institute of Psychoanalysis with Kohut from 1969. The development of these loci derive from both theoretical and personal sources. Scientific debate within a discipline that can progress more or less in its own terms is one thing but the waters are muddied, sometimes irreparably, when personal and group factors are brought into the mix. Psychoanalysis is especially prone to being prey to such issues. Rangell defined an important mechanism as to how this takes place in his paper 'Transference to theory' (Rangell 1982), where he argues that both positive and negative factors in training can be displaced onto the theories that mentors and institutes stand for. 'The entire span of affects from idealization to calumny may get involved, criss-crossing the analytic population, and resulting in cliques based on vertical and horizontal alliances', he asserts in this book (p. 6). According to Rangell, it is what certain theories omit rather than what they add that results in the disintegration of
psychoanalytic theory. If a theory does not add to the early major contributions (especially the Oedipus complex, sexuality and aggression) but omits and replaces it with another aspect, views are not so much contested and obliterated by argument as dismissed for affective reasons. Whether or not readers agree with Rangell's theoretical views (which were considered 'mainstream' in the 1950s and 1960s but are distinctly 'uncool' today, especially in California where he lives!), the central focus of his book is on the consequences of group and personal influences in moulding and distorting scientific perspectives in psychoanalysis. In this he moves between local, national and international settings, as he puts it, 'outlining the scientific and human factors that intertwine at every point of progress and regress' (p. 8). According to Rangell, 'People, events, relationships, social groupings and stratifications, rivalries, common enemies, frustrated ambitions, regroupings: all of these have been as determining and influential in directing the course of psychoanalytic thinking and theory as has the scientific method of observation' (p. 33).

Two pathogenic fallacies have, in Rangell's view, bedevilled psychoanalytic theorizing. The first is replacing an old idea with a new one when both the old and new continue to apply (as in the case of Freud's alleged 'change' from the seduction theory to unconscious fantasy). The second is pars par toto, the selection of a part substituting for the whole (as in the idea that unconscious fantasy totally replaces seduction). Rangell cites Freud writing to Jones, 'All our apostates always grasped part of the truth and wanted to declare it as the whole truth' (p. 47). So Adler, for example, claimed mastery as the supreme concept whereas it should have been seen as added to genitality, conflict, etc. I should however point out that Freud's use of a term like 'apostate' in this connection is significant – this is counterproductive to a scientific approach. For Rangell, the mainstream is no longer main – 'our core beliefs are fragmented and shattered'. It has been replaced by a plurality of alternative theories that have been subject to the flaws above. Rangell's theory is a unitary one, one that is a continuing 'total', 'composite' of ongoing contributions (p. 51).

When Rangell entered psychoanalysis in the 1940s, cultural and interpersonal schools of psychoanalysis were beginning to be influential along with the underplaying of intrapsychic factors, at least to US East Coast liberal-left psychiatrists who were struggling to combine Freud and Marx in understanding the impact of the major cataclysms of the time. Rangell had trained in medicine, neurology and psychiatry. Like many of the best and the brightest of his generation he was trying to understand the mysteries of the relationship between brain, behaviour and life. He began psychoanalytic training at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute, completed a psychiatric residency at the New York Psychiatric Institute and two others, and a year after Pearl Harbor joined the Army Air Force where he spent the next three and a half years.
As Chief of Psychiatry in the Air Surgeon’s office, ‘Jock’ Murray of the Boston Psychoanalytic Society deemed the psychoanalytic approach a valuable part of the war effort. Because he had already been a candidate in psychoanalysis, Rangell was regarded as a ‘key man’. Rangell was directly assigned first to a dynamically oriented psychiatric service at the air-base at Wichita Falls, Texas. From there he was sent to Fort Logan near Denver where he was one of four psychoanalytically oriented teachers for the School of Aviation Psychiatry. Rangell and his three analytic colleagues at the base – Ralph (‘Romi’) Greenson from Los Angeles, Lewis Robbins from Menninger’s and Sydney Berman from Washington – trained medical officers enrolled in the School of Aviation Psychiatry in analytic thinking. Parallel with this, Greenson, who quickly became the most prominent and vocal of the group, began giving informal lectures, seminars and discussions which attracted much enthusiasm and attention. The film Captain Newman MD, written by a friend of Greenson, was based around Greenson and the experiences inspired by narcosynthesis treatments of returnee air-force personnel.

But these accomplishments, according to Rangell, were transitory and quickly soured. As Greenson’s leadership turned to increasing dominance, the mood of the group changed ultimately to ‘aggression, rebellion and increasing rumbles of discontent ... The lightning rod was of course the inspirational and seductive Romi, whose love and acceptance became the currency for self-esteem and perceived standing in our intellectual and affective society ... Everyone, myself included, was attracted to him, and we all quickly came to need his approval’ (p. 87). As a harbinger of psychoanalytic splits which were to come later, Rangell noted a phenomenon of group anxiety, frustration, disillusionment and splintering resulting from the manner in which the psychoanalytic subjects of discussion were received in a personal way that bypassed normal defences. With the growing discontent in the group, Greenson castigated Rangell for not having told him what was happening and their relationship became strained, souring Rangell’s intended move to Los Angeles after the army.

As I have discovered from my own archival research for my forthcoming book on international psychoanalytic politics, Rangell’s short and simple account of events at Fort Logan is at variance with Greenson’s accounts at various times of the same events. For example, in response to Anna Freud’s inquiry about the origins of the problems between Rangell and Greenson, Greenson replied to her on 2 July 1964, ‘The difficulty between Rangell and me goes way back to the war, when I selected him to work in our psychiatric program in Denver. Somehow he thought that meant I loved him and he has never forgiven me for not doing so. There is absolutely nothing scientific in our difficulties, and there never has been’. And on 6 August 1964 Greenson added, ‘As for my difficulties with Rangell, I have already said to you that in my opinion he cannot accept my rejection of him personally, and he is a
very ambitious man. I have no desire to love him or to compete with him and try to avoid situations which would stir up either or both’ (Anna Freud Papers, Library of Congress).

So far as I can tell, Greenson invented a mythology about the origins of his relation with Rangell. Greenson had no role in selecting Rangell to work with him in Denver – they were appointed together (see pp. 137–8). So how could this mean that Rangell misinterpreted this as Greenson ‘loving’ him and then ‘rejecting’ him, and not having ‘forgiven’ him for this? This is a flight of fancy on Greenson’s part. As for Greenson’s avowed lack of desire to compete with Rangell, subsequent events demonstrate that, as they say in the classics, he ‘doth protest too much’! On 8 March 1965 Greenson wrote to Samuel Guttman, chair of the Program Committee of the American Psychoanalytic Association, to try and remove Rangell from chairing a presentation of Greenson’s at the meeting of the Association (which he was to chair as President-Elect of the American Psychoanalytic Association). And in another letter to his friend Masud Khan (25 February 1965), he chided Khan for having invited Rangell to write a celebratory article for Heinz Hartmann’s seventieth birthday, and publishing it as a lead article in the International Journal of Psychoanalysis. Greenson competed with Rangell for the Vice-Presidency of the IPA, the only time that Greenson stood for that position. Many local disruptive issues in the Los Angeles Society during this period had repercussions from the 1940s for decades at all levels of psychoanalytic politics. A good deal of ‘over the top’ correspondence and more is cited by Rangell (pp. 136–7) and is vital for any proper assessment of the historical record. I have been surprised that even such flamboyant players as Ralph Greenson and Masud Khan could be as ‘over the top’ as they were. As Rangell points out, Greenson’s accounts 20 years later also obliterated the group processes that took place at the air-force post many years before (p. 138).

In 1946 Rangell, along with a number of other psychoanalysts, moved west to the paradise of Los Angeles, filled with optimism. He had met Otto Fenichel briefly during World War II, and had been impressed previously by his important new textbook. The Los Angeles Society at the time was divided between the mainstream Freudians and those influenced by Franz Alexander. The mainstream core was composed of European émigrés, including Ernst Simmel, Ernst Levy, Frances Deri and Hanna Fenichel together with a few Americans including Ralph Greenson who, it is true, had himself undertaken some training in Europe. The European group explained their inarticulateness (which inhibited many younger people) at scientific meetings in a distinctly odd way: ‘He (Romi) speaks for us’ (p. 92). The mainstream core was opposed by those aligned with Franz Alexander such as Martin Grotjahn, Norman Levy, May Romm and Judd Marmor. Rangell combined his identification with the Freudian group in Los Angeles with his continued close relationships with his New York colleagues, in
particular, Jacob Arlow, Charles Brenner and Victor Rosen. The fusion
between his identifications with Fenichel and Simmel together with the New
York group forged Rangell’s analytic identity (p. 94).

However, with the deaths in 1946 of Fenichel and in 1947 of Simmel, the
line from Freud was broken and the real divisions over the neutrality of the
analyst and the corrective emotional experience occasioned the ‘big split’ of
1950 in Los Angeles. But, as Rangell rightly says, ‘Ideas alone do not cause
splits; these are brought about by ideas and people. People who get along
can tolerate ideas that differ, and people who don’t like each other person­
ally can make accommodation when they are not divided by theoretical
schisms’ (p. 101). That major split had both affective and theoretical sources.
Yet many analysts denied the affective issues at the time when they could
not have been clearer; a later, less common view held that the causes were
solely personality issues. ‘It is ironic that these elements, which are the
subject matter of psychoanalysis, should so often be considered off-limits in
studies of psychoanalytic history itself’ (p. 105).

The 1950s provided much scientific ferment in ‘ego psychology’ for
Rangell, which went in tandem with clinical work, and extended into the first
half of the 1960s. According to Rangell, the turning point came – at least in
the US – in the mid-1960s when dominant, mainstream scientific theories
were challenged by a variety of alternative psychoanalytic theories which
occasioned movements (such as Kleinians and Kohutian groups) pronoun­
cing ‘superiority’ and greater validity from within their enthusiastic adher­
ents. This was less about scientific developments than about problems
resulting from psychoanalytic politics, training and group psychology.
According to Rangell, these originated, developed and coalesced in a
number of localities, then percolated outwards to national then international
levels in a commonly receptive climate. ‘Constellations of individual leaders,
each with a small group of activist supporters and a larger group of more
passive ones, changed both the quality and the quantity of dissenting voices.’
Frustration is endemic to the nature of analysis. ‘In the psychoanalytic
family, a myriad of personal reactions may also lead to a displaced disaffec­
tion with theory, making for a rich pool of reactive, critical or rebellious
feelings, all of which are, at times, acted out’ (p. 113). These dissenters
wanted to stay within the main organizational system, material consider­
ations having become as important as scientific ones – leaving the tent was
not an automatic response as in the earlier culturalist and interpersonalist
divisions. The dissenters wished to remain connected to the American
Psychoanalytic Association as the standard of Freudian analysis; Rangell
hypothesizes this acceptance to be due to an unconscious knowledge and
inner conviction of the centrality of intrapsychic, unconscious conflicts to
psychoanalytic understanding. Although the individual local issues were
different, the common soil of receptivity to alternative theories and divisions
meant that American psychoanalysis became increasingly divided, which
then impacted on individual attitudes and organizational structures. With leadership positions in the American Psychoanalytic Association (President 1961–62, 1966–67) and in the IPA (Vice-President 1967–69; President 1969–71, 1971–73), Rangell was in the middle of these changes. The soil for dissent was particularly fertile in Southern California during the 1960s in an ‘especially malignant substrate’ which, in Rangell’s view, demonstrates the appropriateness of my description of ‘fear and loathing in LA’ (p. 116). Rangell describes many of his experiences in detail in the Los Angeles situation here for the first time. (Of course, the prominence of the movie industry in LA intensified psychoanalytic boundary issues, as the Marilyn Monroe saga with Ralph Greenson demonstrated.)

Because there was a serious crisis of cohesion and morale with brewing discontent and frustration over advancement to training analyst status in the Los Angeles Society, Rangell was invited to become its president once again for the third time in 1964. Despite a number of achievements in democratization, an incident involving ethics and its sequelae had a permanent scarring effect on the Los Angeles Society. I have gone into this occurrence in depth in my own previous research and report (Kirsner 2000). Recounting this episode, Rangell concluded: ‘Group spirits and confidence never recovered from this incident, which led to further polarization and permanent, although largely hidden, divisions within the Los Angeles Society’ (Rangell 2004, pp. 128–9). As a series of events that I have independently researched in detail and about which I have uncovered a number of significant contemporary documents, I can confirm that Rangell’s description is correct and is, if anything, an understatement of the intensity and effects on the Los Angeles Society of the events he describes here.

Rangell also refers to the theoretical developments over that period in Los Angeles, where object relations and Kleinian ideas were beginning to take root. Bernard Brandchaft, whom Rangell knew for many years and who came to Los Angeles on the strength of that link, became very interested in Kleinian ideas and began making arrangements for prominent Kleinian analysts to visit Los Angeles from London to lecture. According to Rangell, Brandchaft became close to Greenson in common rivalry with Rangell. Greenson’s paper, ‘The origin and fate of new ideas in psychoanalysis’, overtly supported classical theory in keeping what is valuable in traditional analysis at the same time as welcoming new ideas. However, it contained a clear subtext that, in condemning rigidity, was taken at the time as supportive of the Kleinian position. ‘The solace it gave the protesters allowed Greenson, a classical analyst, to make common cause with them, and so indirectly to undermine his rivals in his own school. Thus the curious theoretical alliance between Greenson and Brandchaft’ (p. 133). That common rivalry in the 1960s is a ‘people’ factor which helps explain some otherwise inconsistent positions in ‘ideas’. In Rangell’s view, the shifting tides of ideas – in LA through the ideas of Fairbairn, Klein, Bion, Kohut.
Stolorow, intersubjectivity and enactment – were less connected with the scientific cut and thrust of debate than with group movements and interpersonal phenomena involving rivalry, frustrated ambition and hostile envy. ‘One leader with enormous charisma, a brilliant scientific life, and a strong and dependent following, uniting with another, disappointed and a social activist, against a common rival, can and did produce an irresistible series of historical events’ (p. 135). Rangell comments that the phenomenon of the common rival may be more widespread than that of the common enemy.

Reflecting upon Greenson’s role, Rangell (2004) saw him as:

a subtle mixture of talents and flaws, intense and extreme in both directions. He was the most appealing and successful teacher in the Institute. He was an awesome public speaker. Many who went through training in Los Angeles . . . would remember his lectures and presentations as a glowing and inspiring part of their analytic inheritance. And many who were accepted as part of his private entourage, who met celebrities and creative artists (including film-star patients) at his home remain exhilarated by the experience, and bristle at any criticism. But it would be an oversight not to acknowledge also the economic factors at work. Greenson had a tremendous amount of referral power, and unprecedented access, as ‘analyst to the stars’, to the enormous pool of well-known, glamorous and wealthy patients indigenous to the culture of Los Angeles. His patronage was therefore highly desirable to some of his colleagues, and that made it correspondingly hard to disagree with him, either publicly or privately. (p. 138)

Rangell adds that, given the celebrity culture in Los Angeles, there are ‘always temptations: it was not easy for some analysts to remain objective in their technique, or even to keep their analytic activities confidential’. Some of the moral implications are otherwise documented in *Hollywood on the Couch* (Farber & Green 1993) and in my work (Kirsner 2000, p. 138).

Although Greenson had certain real strengths, the effects of his aggression could be ‘devastating. He could turn against people unpredictably, humiliating his targets pitilessly’. Rangell documents one extraordinary skirmish in 1967 involving Lawrence Kubie. As a discussant for a paper Kubie presented at the Los Angeles Society Greenson attacked Kubie mercilessly and needlessly. Greenson apologized in writing to Kubie, to which Kubie replied:

A round dozen of our colleagues from both societies had anticipated you by phoning me, and by writing me to apologize for your behavior, i.e. for its inaccuracy, for its exhibitionism, and for its confusing incoherence. Some said you were drunk. Some said you had done this before, but never so rantingly . . . it is obvious that you addressed your apology to the wrong man . . . I felt neither hurt nor anger, but only chagrin that any analyst should so forget his responsibility to himself and to analysis. Therefore you owed your apology first of all to yourself, then to your Institute and your colleagues, and finally to analysis itself . . . You owe yourself the opportunity to lie down on the well-worn couch of some mature and unsparing colleague . . . to find out what has happened to you over the years which could lead you to behave in this way . . . I sincerely hope that you will go into full psychoanalytic therapy unsparingly. (p. 140)
Rangell admired this letter, and wished he could have followed it as a model. But these historical facts help place Greenson in a different perspective.

So too with Heinz Kohut. From his direct experience, Rangell ventures the exact time that Kohut became a Kohutian – 30 July 1969 at 10 am at the Rome IPA Congress. Kohut had expected to be elected President but the Nominating Committee had selected Rangell. Immediately following the election, Kohut told Rangell disingenuously: ‘I don’t know how anyone could want to be president. I am a scientist, not a politician’. However, the facts were quite different. In fact there had been a considerable campaign on Kohut’s behalf, including by the Eisslers, Anna Freud and even the current president Piet van der Leeuw. As a matter of record it is worth quoting some supporting evidence from my own research. Van der Leeuw wrote to Kohut on 22 December 1968:

Miss Freud has informed me that you are willing to run for president. I am very happy about your decision and you have my support. In view of my forthcoming visit to the US, I should like to hear from you, what you know about your chances and the activities of Arlow and Rangell in this respect. Let me know the people who will support you and give me some information regarding your European friends. You will know that officially I cannot do much, but I can try to promote your chances in an unobtrusive way. (IPA papers, Library of Congress)

This letter was not known to Rangell who, however, cites a later letter to Kohut from The Curve of Life (Cocks 1994) in which Anna Freud claims: ‘Van der Leeuw and I and a good many people of whom we know want very definitely you’ (p. 150). Recalling that van der Leeuw had told Anita Rangell that he hoped Rangell would become President, Rangell writes, ‘What this discrepancy means is unknown, but perhaps he was insincere with one of us. Such things are not unknown in political circles. Another possibility is that Anna Freud was not straightforward with Kohut’ (p. 150).

Further from my own research: on 6 January 1969 Kohut responded telling van der Leeuw about a party for the Pan-American Congress Latin American visitors that the Eisslers were to give, attended by the Hartmanns, Ed Kronold, Marianne Kris and others. He thought that, given the ‘social sensitivities’ of the Latin Americans, it would be good for van der Leeuw to be there. Then Kohut added:

Thank you for your friendly feelings and your offer to help. There is, of course, nothing to be done ‘officially’ – but a great deal otherwise. You are right that the Latin Americans will support R[angell], but not all of them. The party which the Eisslers are arranging in New York is, for example, an attempt to push things into the right direction, especially among some of the older colleagues who might respond to the social atmosphere. (IPA papers, Library of Congress)

In a letter to Kohut on 10 February 1969 Anna Freud wrote that she had an upsetting letter from van der Leeuw, he himself being very upset. At the meeting of two Sponsoring Committees he had met a number of the representatives of the European Societies and had found to his surprise that they have all
made up their minds to vote for Rangell as the next President. I do not know why, neither does he, but it seems an indisputable fact. This throws all our expectations into confusion. vdL and I both know that you will encounter heavy opposition in the US, from supporters of Arlow and R, but we had been confident that you would have the European votes. If they go another way, it is almost certain that you will be defeated, in spite of vdL, me, Marianne Kris, the Eisslers, etc. And I do not think that it is a good thing to offer oneself for defeat. In this case, it would be better not to stand; also in this case, my advice to you (even if ‘unspoken’ advice) was bad advice. You will have to forgive me for that and you will have to think that I was guided by my wishes . . . I had a talk with Marianne and Dr Eissler and I told them a bit about vdL’s experiences. They were equally upset. (Anna Freud papers, Library of Congress)

It is clear from this correspondence that Kohut had the support of Anna Freud, the outgoing President and other IPA establishment figures, and was clearly counting on winning. Rangell was seen to have the support of the South Americans and Europeans – many among whom were Kleinians. Kohut was the ‘establishment’ candidate. Kohut’s statement to Rangell about being a ‘scientist not a politician’ was clearly sour grapes – he was not a good loser, the effect of having missed out on the greatest international political prize. Kohut had changed. He had been one of the most prominent and conservative spokesman for classical Freudian thought in the US. Kohut had been President of the American Psychoanalytic Association (1964–65) and a Vice-President of the IPA (1965–73). Rangell probably garnered the support of the Kleinians and Europeans because he was seen as more open to their views than Kohut was at that time.

However, the issue of how Kohut became a Kohutian is a complex one. He began writing *The Analysis of the Self* in the mid-1960s and wrote at least a draft during the summers in Carmel in 1967 and 1968 (see Strozier 2001, p. 193), before these events transpired. However, he clearly claimed to have written significant amounts of it after his non-election – as he wrote Robert Wallerstein, ‘I have no doubt now that the writing of *The Analysis of the Self* and *The Restoration of the Self* was more fulfilling to me than an election to the presidency of the IPA would have been’ (p. 154). While *The Analysis of the Self*, published in 1971, was not regarded as anathema, Anna Freud played down Kohut’s new ideas and drew away from him after the publication of that book. Ultimately she viewed Kohut’s work as having become anti-psychoanalytic (Young-Bruehl 1988, p. 440), but that was after the publication of Kohut’s far more controversial *The Restoration of the Self* in 1977. *The Analysis of the Self* was a transitional work but it is reasonable to hypothesize that these political and personal events framed its final direction and the choice and direction of the issues that were developed after it. Rangell cites Lottie Newman as saying that ‘everyone knew’ that Kohut turned to his new theory because he was not elected President of the IPA (p. 149).

Another issue about which Rangell makes some first-time revelations
concerns Anna Freud. Anna Freud was concerned that her Hampstead Child Therapy Course and Clinic were not approved for study group status with the IPA at the 1971 Vienna Congress. No administration before or after did so, mainly because they did not approve a society which was limited to training in child analysis and not across the life-cycle. However, for some reason, Anna Freud concentrated all her anger on Rangell and the administration at the time of the Vienna Congress. Rangell contests Anna Freud’s misunderstandings of what lay behind these and related events as described in Young-Bruehl’s (1988) biography. He believes, with good reason, that Anna Freud’s views of Rangell’s positions were filtered through her close relationship with Greenson who had much animus for Rangell.

In group decisions and activities, Rangell emphasizes the role of the supportive, receptive group, the base of the population pyramid, and its reciprocal interactions with individual leaders, not leaders alone, in shaping historical trends. The move from Freud to Klein and then to Kohut by the same leaders and followers in Los Angeles was, in Rangell’s view, a result of group psychology and not careful and thorough familiarity with the new systems. It appeared to Rangell in both cases that ‘it was the superficial promises rather than knowledge in depth that attracted the large number of followers. The claim that choice of theory followed a period of thoughtful observation does not stand up in the face of the series of rapid conversions among such different explanatory systems’ (pp. 185–6). This has been endemic in the history of psychoanalysis. ‘When charismatic or seductive leaders offer a simplified theory that promises more satisfaction than a more complex composite one, the chemistry between leader and led, between theory and adherents, is catalysed, and a reaction of acceptance and excitement follows’ (p. 187).

This continued, according to Rangell, through to the present day in Los Angeles with the coalescing of various theoretical perspectives into groups sharing mutual interests in the place of the ‘old’ version of psychoanalysis that divided them. The Southern Californian Society, for example, moved from Alexandrian post-oedipal to Kleinian pre-oedipality skipping the Oedipus complex from both directions, Rangell asserts. The arrival of the new era of theoretical pluralism ‘attracted more passion than scientific rigor. The atmosphere was conducive to excitement but not to scholarship or even fidelity . . . The theoretical preferences that bound groups together were based not on new observations, but on interpersonal allegiances and friendships that shifted rapidly and gave rise to the quick swells and regular alternations of new explanatory theories’ (p. 204). That is his sad observation of the way the field has so often been moved by group phenomena. To his having been termed ‘conservative’ as opposed to Greenson being ‘liberal’, he makes the point that he shared a theoretical approach with Greenson but ‘separated on the question of how to act upon those concepts’ (p. 207). The level of divisive activity represented by Greenson, by his close friend Masud
Khan and the collaboration of Anna Freud in Greenson’s activities is at present in the process of being revealed by a number of writers. These alliances were decidedly odd. Anna Freud, the arch-conservative, teamed up with Greenson and Khan, both flamboyant odd-balls, both more favourably inclined to innovations than to defending the classical Freudian positions. The reasons that Anna Freud was blind to the clear flaws of such younger flamboyant men may be interesting to ponder.

Throughout Rangell has been concerned with the creation of a unitary, composite theory of psychoanalysis, integrating findings based upon a scientific method continuously developing toward a coherent, composite whole. His aim is to add when appropriate rather than replace ideas which remain valid. During the 1960s and 1970s he developed his theories about anxiety, the nature of intrapsychic conflict, unconscious decision-making and his concept of ‘the human core’. In this central concept in his thought, Rangell suggested that ‘it was this nuclear human area of unconscious intrapsychic conflict that demarcated the region of psychoanalytic expertise, and differentiated psychoanalysis from the other social sciences’ (p. 189). To this cumulative theory, he added the idea of an active unconscious ego in endeavouring to understand ego functioning further, retaining action within structural theory. This formulation stands in contrast to Schafer, who, to include a psychology of action, introduces a new language for psychoanalysis.

Rangell introduced his concept of ‘the syndrome of the compromise of integrity’ in his outgoing presidential address to the IPA Congress in Paris in 1973. This was a new diagnostic entity. He melded his experiences in psychoanalytic politics locally, nationally and internationally with contemporary social affairs, particularly the Watergate crisis occurring at that time. While Freud explored the application of individual depth studies to groups and the ‘mass’, Rangell thought it additionally useful to apply findings about group behaviour to individual psychology. He thought that psychoanalysis embraced a wider insight into psychopathology than just the neuroses and more disturbed behaviour, and there was a qualitatively new dimension applicable to both individual and groups which was as ubiquitous as neurosis in human affairs. As neurosis arises from conflicts between the ego and the id, the compromise of integrity arises from conflicts between the ego and the superego. Much group behaviour arises from ‘a subtle combination of neurotic and corrupt group interactions’, where ‘an unconscious substrate of ego–superego conflicts, aiming toward narcissistic satisfaction at the expense of superego regulation, results in compromises of integrity’ (p. 199). Rangell explored the related notion of unconscious decision-making, in which we are often not aware of our responsibility that we are acting.

With the proliferation of competing theories from the 1970s, according to Rangell, the scientific approach changed qualitatively and with that change came a new type of restlessness. ‘Influences from the top . . . set the tone and
established theories in vogue in each institute or society. Often promulgated by widely read and charismatic authors and opinion-makers, these in-vogue theories of the moment could be absorbed, enhanced and rendered contagious by the cumulative pressures of group approval’ (p. 208). This then had implications for clinical work, thus identifying groups within the institute with particular belief-systems. Rangell suggests that unconscious resentment against established theory becomes routed through new theories that are less anxiety-producing than the previous total theory. Rangell cites examples of leaving out ‘drives in favor of objects; in yet others, conflicts in favor of defects; or oedipal etiology in favor of preoedipal or inborn factors’ (p. 209). Many adopt one theory or another in local institutes. This affects the training process, which affects the kinds of graduates emerging.

I would add that it is a peculiarity of psychoanalysis that there are so many followers of persons – Freud, Adler, Jung and Klein to Bion, Kohut or Mitchell. Who is arguing replaces what is being argued. Group processes substitute for science. Just because psychoanalysis focuses on the personal, its theory need not be personal. I think it is important to note that what is important here is not so much whether any particular theory is right or wrong but the mode of dealing with approaches. Is it based on group processes or charisma, or is it based on observation, experience and argument? Rangell’s own views may appear ‘conservative’ to some but it is his view that ‘pluralism’ can mask lack of thinking and affective adherence to particular theories that are adopted. I think much of his approach lies in challenging theories that are seen as the entire solution rather than as part of a solution and welcoming new ideas into a developing whole that he sees as the discipline.

Organizationally, Rangell sees the negative view of the American Psychoanalytic Association adopted by many of the institutes and partly within the Association itself as scapegoating for the negative consequences of bad training and theory in the local institutes. This was particularly clear in Southern California where the American Psychoanalytic Association has often been seen as an enemy, as the East Coast versus the West Coast. Rangell’s own experience of the American Psychoanalytic Association from the 1950s into the 1980s stood in contrast to this view where he was astonished at the courage leaders ‘displayed in trying moral and practical situations. There was no rigidity, coldness or inflexibility; if anything there was perhaps too much tolerance of questionable local practices, in the spirit of avoiding any taint of authoritarianism’ (p. 214). That view adds to many different views of the situation historically and can be seen as somewhat correcting a perspective that only sees the negative aspects of the American Psychoanalytic Association.

The idea of multiple theories prevailed over the quest for a unitary theory and this was reflected in the American Psychoanalytic Association which came to resemble the IPA in its range of approaches. Of course, this has
been the post-modern way across many disciplines. Rangell traces the debates over lay analysis, pluralism, common ground and sees them in terms of the systematic forgetting of the project of a unitary theory, omitting parts and substituting parts for the whole. Rangell's critique of the diversions posed by pluralist approaches applies as well to general post-modern perspectives. Because there has been historically so much authoritarianism in psychoanalysis, influenced by 'people' rather than 'ideas', I believe that Rangell is steering a course that counsels openness in theory within the quest for a unitary approach while systematically eschewing personal and group influences as far as possible, not displacing them onto theory.

Much of the last part of the book concerns some recent theoretical controversies (e.g. Schafer, Wallerstein, Fonagy, neurosciences, determinism) together with Rangell's developments in many areas and new directions, including the psychoanalysis of public opinion. There is also his wider view of the way psychoanalytic groups display affect in their divisions and rapprochements.

I am not so sure that the level of established psychoanalytic knowledge is as high as Rangell believes. However, the method of the quest for a unified theory as uncontaminated by personal, interpersonal and group influences as possible is a crucial perspective that demands attention. I am sure Rangell would agree that distinguishing between deviation and development has been historically an excuse by so many dominant personalities and groups to quash dissent and stymie freedom of thought. But Rangell is no stranger to robust debate. Throughout the book and his work he views scientific debate as a necessary condition for development. This is in line with Kernberg's classic observation (1986) that seminarian and trade school approaches in psychoanalytic education dominate over the preferable art school and university models which would advance the field scientifically and clinically. Right through the book, the concept of the displacement of 'people' issues onto 'ideas', of the importance of 'transference to theory', is highlighted.

The book is attractively presented with eight pages of photographs from a life spent in psychoanalysis. There are also appendices concerning the meeting and correspondence of Rangell's late wife, Anita Rangell, with the 'Wolf Man'. While I have discussed the major thrust of Rangell's important work, there is much more vital material there. It is very well written, clear and absorbing and is a first-rate, first-hand account of crucial events and ideas in the history of psychoanalysis. Because of the focus of this Journal, I have particularly concentrated this review article on the historical features of the book and, in particular, some issues that I have researched closely myself. But there is much more about theory there. It provides significant new documentation and interpretation of decisive events in the history of psychoanalysis as well as important insights into what has gone wrong in the field and why.
References


