

Rapaport-Klein Study Group Saturday, June 13, 2009 (9 a.m.)

This year's meeting was dedicated to Bob Holt who has been the senior and guiding spirit of The Rapaport-Klein Study Group for many years now. Bob has let us know that he might not be able to attend our meetings in the future. While we hope he will drop in when he can, we thought this would be a good time to celebrate his contributions and the friendship he and his dear wife, Joan, have extended to the group and to so many of us individually. They have been wonderful friends and colleagues for decades.

In appreciation of Bob's contributions, we decided to forgo the usual Saturday morning Round Robin and, instead of having members mention their own current activities, give everyone a chance to comment on how Bob has influenced them over the years and to express their appreciation. Not everyone spoke but everyone enjoyed and concurred in the warm recollections and thanks expressed in the following transcript.**

*Paul Lippmann &
Doris Silverman
co-chairs:*

(Not recorded.) Bob Holt has informed us that this is the last year he expects he will be able to attend these Rapaport-Klein meetings as regularly as he has in the past. So we thought instead of the usual Round Robin we would go around the room and let everyone have a chance to express their appreciation to Bob for his contributions over the years.

Doris Silverman:

I am a big fan, and a thorough-going admirer of Bob's. It started way back when I was a kid (that is in Graduate School). I think it was Bernie Kalinkowitz who steered me to the Research Center. I remember his saying that he does not suggest it for most of his graduate students, but he thought I belonged there. I didn't even question him about it.

(Audio recording begins here.) That was typical of me in those days - shy, hesitant, and readily intimidated. Like the good girl I was, I followed instructions and I found myself at the Research Center for Mental Health. In those days it was located at 21 Washington Place. These were cramped quarters for many of us with divider panels that didn't go up to the ceiling. It was a lively, noisily, intense and exciting place. Regular meetings were held where people presented ongoing work or outside speakers would present their current interests. A hot bed of competition existed among the staff. Hands would raise immediately after a presentation and staff members would strut their stuff.

It was a marvelous, heady experience for a young graduate student and I loved it. I never could have imagined that Bob Holt and I could become friends. I was amazed and awed by him. He was a careful, thoughtful speaker. His comments were always germane to the issues presented. His prose was clear and he could present pertinent issues in a lucid and precise manner. He never flaunted his position or his knowledge.

** Transcription: E. Waters. An audio recording from this session and photographs of the members present are available on the Rapaport-Klein Study Group web site: <http://www.psychomedia.it/rapaport-klein/>

We knew why he was one of the heads of the Center and that he had wisdom to offer. People flocked to the Center to work on their research ideas, and yes, like me, to simply absorb the exciting intellectual climate of the place. I recall after my two years of being supported by NIMH, I needed additional support from the Research Center. With my heart and my mouth I approached Bob and I remember, I could barely address the issue I needed to discuss even though I'd rehearsed it in my head. Bob was the one who was forthcoming and generous and granted me support.

I can also remember when (my husband) Lloyd (Silverman)'s work was challenged and denigrated. It occurred at these meetings as well. They were broiling battles that sometimes took place. Bob would arrive and in his composed, unruffled manner, discussed the embattled issues, addressed the favorable features of Lloyd's work, and when he thought it relevant, described what needed to be worked on further. He was always fair minded, relevant and elegantly smart and thereby able to cool passions. What I think Bob may minimize is the powerful influence he has had on students. I never thought I would be interested in research or that I could think about epistemological issues that could constrain or advance our field.

Thinking critically is an important and sustaining experience. Of course critical and empirical discourse with clinician colleagues often produces antagonism. I certainly have felt my share of it. Nonetheless, I treasure the way I have learned to think and I thank Bob for his major contribution.

I've one last issue. It turns out in talking to Bob that he's a photographer and I was delighted to hear this. On the top of my bookcase I have pictures of people who have influenced me in the field, so I very much want a picture of you and we have Everett (Waters), who's going to be the photographer and take pictures of Bob and the rest of us. I thank you Bob very much.

Bob Holt: Thank you.

Doris Silverman: Okay, who's next?

Paul Lippmann: I'll reserve mine for – I'll reserve my comments for later. Let's go around the room and see who would like to add to this. Yes, Susan.

Susan Coates: Almost half a century ago I learned the meaning of scholarship from Bob and I think I've always admired your enormous

intellectual vitality. Your deep generosity to students and your generosity with yourself, with your mind. And I've admired your ethics. I've admired your deep, deep sense of civic responsibility that you've always had. And I've always admired the fact that you're a gentle man, and a gentleman. And I love the twinkle in your eye and your great smile.

Bob Holt: Thank you.

John Kerr(?): Does Bob get a chance to rebut any of this? (*laughter!*)

Bob Holt: I'm wondering what I'm supposed to do.

Paul Lippmann: The rebuttal can come from those of us around here.

Dave Wolitzky (?): You need a discussant.

Paul Lippmann: Morris.

Morris Eagle: Well, I hardly know where to begin. You came to the Research Center, Bob in what year?

Bob Holt: In '53?

Morris Eagle: 1950?

Bob Holt: '53.

Morris Eagle: So that means we've known Bob for 56 years.

Paul Lippmann: Right.

Bob Holt: Well you weren't there. You weren't there at the very beginning.

Morris Eagle: Yes I was.

Bob Holt: You were?

Doris Silverman: He was quiet. He was so quiet you didn't notice him.

Morris Eagle: I was wearing a wig at the time. (*laughter.*)

Paul Lippmann: He also calls himself a surgeon (?) though.

Morris Eagle: I was a lot taller.

Bob Holt: Oh you were that guy.

Morris Eagle: Anyway I met Bob, as Doris was saying, when he was co-director of the Research Center and like all of us, I was awed and somewhat intimidated by his scholarship, by his incredible articulateness and you know extraordinary articulateness. I don't know if it's true but we used to – among ourselves we'd spread the story that everything you wrote was a first draft and that it was spoken and that it didn't require any editing after that. That's what we used to – probably was true.

Bob Holt: (*chuckle.*)

Morris Eagle: In any case, one of the reasons it's hard to know where to begin is from that initial being awed and intimidated by Bob, and this is testimony to the experience many of us have had, a relationship slowly developed into a friendship, which I deeply value and always have.

Part of the friendship was formed over the many years I would rent your little cabin in Cape Cod, which was just a few feet away from the main house so I got to know Joan and Bob almost as a member of the family, at least I felt that way. They may not have felt that way but I did. (*laughter.*)

No, they were always generous and welcoming and wonderful. And there's a quality of Bob that Susan referred to which I find so incredibly admirable. Bob is one of those people who really does believe in changing the world. Not only does he believe in it, but he devotes so much of his time and energy to doing it, not just talking about it, whether it's climate change or politics in Truro or your later years at NYU, the peace work. I don't mean PIECE but PEACE. He never did any piecework of the former kind as far as I know.

But I only know very few people who embody the Erikson's concept of Generativity, and I was always very skeptical about these stages that Erikson wrote about because most people that I knew, it's a nice abstract set of categories but I didn't know that applied to anyone. Well it really does apply to Bob. I think his faith in the world, his commitment to doing something about changing the world every day that he's in the world is quite remarkable. I don't think I know anyone else like that and like you. Anyway it's very fitting that we all talk about you today not just because of your age, but because it's a terrific opportunity for

all of us to say what we say among ourselves and what we don't say to you. So –

Doris Silverman: Yes. (*quietly*).

Paul Lippmann: That's terrific. (*quietly*).

Bob Holt: That's very sweet of you, you know, and I must say I – not so much from you but I have the feeling, gee, I wish I'd known this guy. (*laughter!*)

I don't recognize a lot of it as me. For example, I've always had the feeling that one of my main problems as a teacher was that I'm so inarticulate, that I have this –

Group: (*No, no*).

Morris Eagle: We didn't know you were delusional.

Bob Holt: I have this self-concept that I always was like this you know, I mean unable to speak out and say what I wanted to say in clear sentences and it's just astonishing to hear you say that I really did that.

Paul Lippmann: You really did that.

Bob Holt: Cause I wanted to but I never thought that I actually did it.

Doris Silverman: You know Bob, I was telling people at dinner about that, what Morris said, the way you spoke, I often thought you just sat down at your typewriter and wrote just the way you thought. And I told you this once and so you sent me a paper that you were working on about – I guess this was in metapsychology and there were all sorts of red marks all over the paper. I mean I thought, "What a relief!"

Bob Holt: Oh sure, I mean I have to – you should – you know my book went through ten years of editing and all sorts of delays and six different drafts. I mean proofs from incompetent printers.

(?): You mean the Primary Process book? (*Background*).

Bob Holt: But every time, I found not only printer's errors but my own errors. And I'm sure if I sat down and read my book now I would find things I would change.

Morris Eagle:

I have to add to this cause anyone who knows you, it has to be mentioned and included, Bob's generosity in responding to a paper that you send him is legend. You get the paper back and there are pages and pages of corrections, suggestions, criticisms. Your generosity in dealing with colleagues, students in that particular way is quite remarkable and quite rare and I think it has to be mentioned. It's extraordinary.

Paul Lippmann:

Last night while Paolo (Migone) was preparing for his own unexpected giving a paper, Bob and Paolo sitting together in our living room, huddled together for a good hour going over it; lending himself to it, helping, all the time, all the time he walked me through my dissertation at NYU. He was the dissertation sponsor even though he was in California. Letters would come back filled, and wonderful, but not holding onto it forever; letting it go, letting it go towards completion because some people will work on stuff forever and ever and the student never is finished. But Bob was both able to work on stuff carefully and let it go, which was a great delight to me. So certainly his generosity and his openness to new experience was always appealing.

Paul Lippmann:

I first met Bob in an interview when I was applying to NYU and in that interview he offered help on getting a place to live, on a whole bunch of things. He's always been extremely, extremely helpful and generous to Fran (Lippmann) and myself and to our relationship. And his – Joan (Holt) and he and Fran and I have spent some lovely, lovely times together talking about our children, advising each other, helping each other with some very important issues in our life, not just the professional side.

His commitment to social justice has been mentioned. His commitment to good gardening should be mentioned and to organic gardening. His home in Truro is an absolute delight for all of us.

His openness to new experience... One I remember was when Morris (Eagle), Fran (Lippmann), myself and maybe one or two others, Bob wanted to see what Simchat Torah (celebration of annual cycle of Torah reading) was like in Brooklyn. Wanted to see what's there; we found out it was Simchat Torah. He had never been to one of these things and like an eager, curious child, wanted to partake in the experience. We had to restrain him from trying to dance with the Torah (*chuckles*). But we went and saw the – had the experience. It was wonderful. That's just a sample of what he was open to all the time, all the time. It's been a delight to know you.

Debbie Browning

I met Bob in I think 1970, 1969, 1973. Bob, I wasn't even in the doctoral program yet. I was in their newly minted masters program at NYU and I was coming out of a rigorous and ruthless graduate program in musicology where the model of teaching was that you try to sort kill your graduate students so that they would never come into your shoes. (*chuckles.*) And if they could survive, then you could move on and I was not meant for that environment. And I was also coming out of a divorce. I was quite shaken and quite vulnerable.

And to find Bob, who could be so smart, so knowledgeable and yet so gentle and mentoring was just an amazing thing. I had never met someone who could be smart and supportive at the same time.

And so the first course I took with him, it was in primary process. He had a little workshop. I found that amazing and I still use that kind of awareness of the subtle shifts in thinking as I listen to my patients. I think about oh that's a little bit of "regressed sec-pro" (secondary process) and there you have a little bit of a peculiar verbalization. I have those elements broken down the way Bob could break down primary process so you can hear it in the flow of the patient's associations. It is something that stays with me after what is this - not as long as some of you guys but for still a long time.

And then I took, I worked for you. You did a lot of funding of my graduate training and in Loevinger's Ego Development. And I learned Loevinger's System under Bob with thoroughness that I've come to realize was far more clinical, her thinking, than you realize because it was a research model; the extent to which it really was ahead of your time and is very much Object Relations. And so much of how I listen to my patients, in terms of their object representations, I realize comes from the training from Bob about Loevinger.

And then in terms of a family, he was, and Joan (Holt) were willing to mentor me in that way too when they brought me in to teach both their children piano. So I got to know the boys when they were very young. So I felt like you provided, you and Joan provided a kind of home base for me which I could use at NYU when in all other respects I was completely rudderless. And so for that I thank you.

Paul Lippmann:

Phyllis?

Phyllis Ackman:

I want to just add to you were saying, I didn't know Bob until after I finished graduate school. I was in the Midwest at University of Michigan which at the time, in the middle and late 50's was rigorously empirical and also psychoanalytic - and people did talk to one another. And I did a dissertation that was not a popular one - doing Rorschach testing under altered conditions using hypnosis and the voluntary instructions and combining them.

And somehow I got wind of the primary process scoring system of yours, which really was then not only acceptable to all those rigorous, empirical people, but also to the psychoanalytic clinicians. And not only did I get interesting results in this very small sample, what's happened is that it had a tremendous impact on my own development as a clinician. The way I think clinically really was very much affected from learning that primary process scoring system. You know it's complicated, it's rich, it's varied; and I think the way I listen to patients really is very much affected by that scoring system. And got to know you then, really much later after that was all completed and I came back first to Cambridge and there you were.

Dave Wolitzky:

I just want to add a brief word. I mean obviously there's an incredibly strong consensus among all of us and I would say pretty much everything that everyone else said. But on a personal note, I just want to add that when I first came to NYU, many years ago - 1961, Bob was away in California that year, and so George, who wasn't terribly well organized, would do things like agree to chair two symposiums and two different conferences on the same day. And then when he discovered that he would dispatch me to handle one of them. Of course when Bob returned a year later, with a full beard, from California, it was clear that the Research Center was going to run in a very organized and efficient way and he was a great administrator.

But, and I'm indebted to you Bob in many respects, you've been a very generous and wonderful friend over the years. But one thing I would highlight is, when I first came to NYU, I struggled a lot in terms of writing. And from reading your papers as well as your numerous comments on what I was trying to do, I feel I benefited enormously - to the point where, over time, I began to enjoy writing and felt I could do it in a gratifying, effective way which I didn't feel before I met you. Thank you.

Bob Holt:

You know, on that, I have a comment to make, that to this day I still feel the need to correct people's writing. It's all a sublimation of a trait that goes way back. One of the early memories that's

very vivid in my mind is from - I can't remember just what grade it was but something like 4th or 5th grade - when the teacher said to me in an exasperated tone, "Robert, go out and walk in the hall and reflect a while on why you always have to criticize everybody else." (*laughter*). And it's true that I was always very intolerant of other people's sloppy thinking.

Morris Eagle: Most wonderful sublimation. (*laughter*).

Bob Holt: And that was a humiliating experience and – but it's a problem that I've struggled with all my life. I am still very want – I have a strong tendency to want to put people down and to tell 'em, "No, no, that's not the way to do it!"

Morris Eagle: You're in the perfect place for it.

Bob Holt: What?

Morris Eagle: You're in the perfect place for it - The Rapaport-Klein Group.

Bob Holt: Yeah, so I have somehow managed to still be able to express that and yet do it in a way that amazingly enough people like.

Background: It's helpful. They like it. Yes.

Morris Eagle (?): They like it, instead of killing you.

Dave Wolitzky: I find it enormously valuable.

Paul Lippman: Bert and Phebe and then Bernard.

Bert Freedman: I met Bob in the 1950's and actually he and George offered me a job at the Research Center but for personal reasons and I couldn't take it. But they provided me with the most wonderful stories of all my friends at the Research Center. So when I came to Rapaport Klein 10 years later I met Bob again and it been a wonderful reencounter.

But what I'd like to share with you is my own construction of what he has given to us, from Murray, from George and Merton and Bob and that is it's giving to psychoanalysis. I like to call it, to use a popular phrase these days, The Audacity of Critique.

And mainly, of course, I'm talking about you took a concept which was a very foundation of psychoanalysis a hundred years ago -

bound and unbound energy, primary and secondary processes, and he critiqued it again.

He's not the only one that had critiqued it. But he critiqued it and he went before The New York Psychoanalytic Society and said, "I have to challenge what my teachers have taught me." This is a very, I still recall it, a very gutsy stance.

He also ..., the ones around him did recognize and we appreciated what he had given us. And yet he did recognize the harshness; he looked it right in the face. And then he worked step by step to reconstruct this concept, primary and secondary process thinking, to give it a new validity. So what in this whole project over decades, where he initially had sought and destroyed, he has recon- ... , transformed and reconstructed, and that is a tremendous gift to our field.

And I think we can be grateful to Bob for what he has given us, always a lesson in what I call The Audacity of Critique.

The only additional thing I can say is with Merton when I met him first in the '50s; he discovered he has a marvelous singing voice. And I'm not sure he is still singing but that adds to the love that you've given to us as a community.

Paul Lippmann: Phebe.

Bob Holt: Thank you.

Phebe Cramer: Well when I first met Bob in 1958 when I came to the Research Center and NYU and the graduate program. I was given an appointment as a research assistant at the Research Center and that's how I first got to know Bob.

But more importantly, I think for me in terms of my future work was that Bob taught a course on the TAT and I took that course and it was a wonderful course. It really excited me about the TAT and its possibilities and, as you'll see a little later this morning, I've gone on to base my research on defense mechanisms using the TAT. So I think there's always a kind of an intellectual lineage in our lives and mine certainly, in that respect, began with Bob and thank you for that.

Paul Lippmann: I want to add to that the analysis of fantasy by Murray. He brought Murray to us, which was amazing, and with Murray of course came that whole story, and Jung, introducing all of that. Also his

course on *Clinical vs. Statistical Prediction* was a proseminar and he lead us through Meehl's thin book with beautiful criticism that allowed first year graduate students to being the discussion and did it in such a fine way. I just wanted to add that.

Bernie and then ...

Bernie Ehrenberg: What I've written I will tell you. When I came to the Research Center in September of 1959; I had very little academic experience. I had come from Paris, France where after the war. I'd been working my father's sweater business and there, by studying on my own and some evening classes, I passed the *bacalaureat*.

In the U.S. I did two years in the Army and with the GI Bill, I graduated from Brooklyn College within three years. Was given one year credit for the French *bacalaureat*.

So in a clinical psychology program of NYU, I was working very hard to keep my own. I was shy; I was not used to the American social atmosphere. To me, Bob Holt was Mr. ... *Monsieur le Directeur* and, to my surprise, to others he was just Bob. (*chuckles*).

I found him a very intelligent and efficient leader of the Center, experiencing him as very supportive. I remember two moments. Once he asked me to have lunch with him and tried to make me feel at ease. I don't know if he really succeeded. Another time on a paper for his course on ego-psychology, after tiring of correcting my English, he finished by saying that he was impressed by the last page of concentrated thinking, which he felt was a nice assimilation of Rapaport's way of thinking. After, since then I still think about that. Yes, Professor Bob Holt was very helpful to me.

Paul Lippmann: Everett.

Everett Waters: Paul (Lippmann) mentioned Paul Meehl. When I was a graduate student and I took a course on Philosophical Psychology from Meehl and I remember one time in asking him outside of class something about this clinical versus statistical prediction stuff that we were talking about in class. I can only paraphrase; I don't remember exactly what he said but it was something to the effect that, "that Bob Holt", and I don't remember what he said, " he was wrong", or "he couldn't prove, – Bob could not prove what he was trying to say"; but then he muttered, "But at least it was a fair fight." (*laughter*). And I don't think Meehl thought he got in many

fair fights. I think he thought he had it over on most people. So he said, “You should read that guy’s work.” Then he punctuated what he said with a comment and he points down the hall to one of our very distinguished Minnesota faculty members, whose name we needn’t mention right now, and he said, “And by the way, that guy down the hall, there’s a lot less there than there appears to be.” (*laughter*). So he had pretty high standards when he thought he’d gotten hold of a pretty good adversary.

A different kind of thing, indirectly relevant here today, I remember some years ago I was attending the 50th wedding anniversary of a Quaker friend of mine and Quaker’s have the belief that if they sit quietly and contemplatively, sometimes the Holy Spirit will come down and alight on people and they’ll speak spontaneously.

So we’re at this big wedding ...this anniversary celebration outdoors for my friend. They had a tent and he and his wife were sitting in front of this big colorful tent and all his friends were out, so many friends were out in the audience, out in the sunny day and every once in a while somebody would just stand up and say something nice about my friend John for his 50th wedding anniversary.

And my five-year-old son was with us and all of a sudden he pulls on my shirt and he says, “I wanna say something.” He stands up on a chair and he says out of the blue, “I don’t know John Stamm very well, but from all the nice things people are saying, he must be a very good man.” (*chuckles*). And all these Quakers were sure that the Holy Spirit had landed on that little boy and said the right thing. (*laughter*.) So, so many people are saying such nice things about Bob, notwithstanding the rebuttals, which I guess are coming, (*laughter*), he must be a very nice man. (*laughter*).

Debbie Browning: The Holy Spirit does not come down; it’s found within you.

Everett Waters: Sorry.

Debbie Browning: As the Quaker in the room, I have to correct you. I’m rebutting you.

Everett Waters: Well then, the little fellow had the spirit came out of him.

Debbie Browning: Yes, I had to correct that.

Paul Lippmann: John.

John Kerr:

Well I heard Bob ... I met Bob Holt before I met him. I was an aide at McLean Hospital, and very much in love with Christine Mooney who was a researcher at McLean working on a Gunderson-Stanton psychotherapy with schizophrenia research project. And Bob consulted for that; came up and visited. 'Cause all I heard about him for a month was about this Robert Holt and possibility of doing empirical research, and that he was saying, "No, you don't do it like this, you do it like that." And really helping, I mean you hit like a bombshell there. I remember that intervention and the possibility of doing real research on concepts like primary process, which at least you know Gunderson was a researcher but this was new to him at the time.

So when I went to NYU I thought where is this guy Holt? And if he was good enough for Christine Mooney, he was good enough for me. And he was teaching a course at that time on research methods which was an introduction. And students in my classes, you know they were all products of the '60s. They wanted nothing to do with research and I was trying to explain to em, "No, no, its this fellow Holt and you've gotta take this course."

And I was trying to explain to them that there was a place called Iowa where research was saying psychoanalysis couldn't exist, it was impossible; and Bob Holt is our last best chance of not being overrun by the Huns from Iowa. And a number of em signed up who wouldn't, but in the course Bob would present stuff and they weren't sure about this at all. And then he presented a study and it ... I don't remember exactly but the intervention involved taking videotapes of people talking - I don't know if it was couples counseling or something - and then replaying the videotape in front of a small group and criticizing it. And then they had various measures in this and that and the students were wrestling with it and trying to get a hold of it. And finally after about 45 minutes, Bob said, "Did anyone notice that two experimental subjects killed themselves from humiliation of the ..." I don't remember who assigned that thing - I think, but you pointed out that ..., I mean, two subjects killed themselves. They were humiliated ... and the group ... criticizing their videotape.

Paul Lippmann:

Oh, my God!

John Kerr:

And after that, the class was with you. They realized there was a way to pay attention.

Another thing about Bob, I don't know if people remember this or realize that he was an early supporter of Peter Swales. He helped Peter Swales get a hearing (*for his research on Freud's life*) when Peter Swales was just a poor manager for the Rolling Stones. And he was absolutely indispensable to me following down that same wicked path.

I was working with Paul Schrader, who's a screenwriter. Paul Schrader does movies like *Raging Bull* and *Cat People* and was trying to do something about Freud, and Jung, and (Sabina) (Minna) Spielrein (*a patient of Jung*). And I'd gone far enough to make the story involve certainly Jung having something (an affair) with Spielrein and Spielrein spilling the beans to Freud. And also about Swales' theory about the sister in law, Freud's sister in law. And it started to look to me like mutual blackmail.

Meanwhile trying to do a dissertation on splitting. I talked to Bob about this story at a clinic Christmas party; and he said, "Why don't you do your dissertation on it?" And this is unbelievable, you know, I'm going around telling all my friends, "Bob Holt's gonna back this thing. We'll try it." But I never dreamed that such a story could be taken down this kind of venue. And without him it couldn't have happened. But in terms of what he was talking about earlier when I'd give him chapters, he would mark them up severely and criticize them and everything on point and so on. And some of this stuff was pretty new I was finding.

I finally said to him, "But Bob did you like the chapter?" He said, "Oh, yes." To say that, so the next chapter I handed in was all marked up, but it came back, but on the very top of it was, "Good." But this identification with the aggressor has gone into editing.

One last thing that I learned - I learned a lot I haven't talked about but he has the most beautiful delete mark - it was out and over and around and comes and tails off and it's got ... ; I have a paper of his that he marked up and every now and then I go and brush up on that delete mark. People accept it better with that delete mark

Joan Holt: I want to say that he loved your chapters. He always used to say that when he came home.

Doris Silverman: And you've turned it into a wonderful book.

Paul Lippmann: Oh, absolutely. Well both of you. Marcia?

Marcia Cavell:

Yes, well very briefly I *hadn't met* (?) Bob until today but nevertheless he's been an influence.

I came to him from Reuben Fine who impressed me as somebody who was able to talk plain English about difficult complicated stories and subjects. And Freud, though a wonderful writer, was not always very clear. And here was somebody at the time who would say about the child and *those that care for them* (?) that they're not just cathected through the body of the child alone, but that they're there a major way that he has of intercourse with the external world. And I said, "Right. And here was Interpersonal Theory."

And then I went to Bob and he once again, that was a longer moment, I think, speaking plain English about very important subjects and speaking clearly. And I thought, "Ooh, it's possible to do that". And I hope it's affected my own writing, that clarity, and that clarity, not only of speaking but obviously of thinking. And I felt that Bob didn't say anything that he didn't really understand and I can't say that about a lot of other psychoanalysts. So thank you.

Paul Lippmann:

Thank you. Craig.

Craig Piers:

Well, I've known you for a shorter period of time and I made some notes; but I wanted to talk about your impact on me, how, what influence you had and also our meeting. We have to go back 17 years, just 17 to 1992 and several important things happened in '92 and I've listed them first, you published a paper, "The Contemporary Crisis of Psychoanalysis". Which ... I'd already known your work for several years. But in it you framed what problems were with metapsychology, the clinical theory of psychoanalysis and how we had to begin addressing these issues or psychoanalysis would be in a lot of trouble. This was in 1992.

Also in 1992 you also published in *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, a response to Steven Reisner's paper, "Reclaiming Metapsychology." This is what we were trying to talk about last night. In that one you said, "Some problems created by Freud's inconsistency," and you took on Reisner and how he was trying to resurrect certain aspects of Freudian theory that you thought had already been addressed in some of your own work. And what again, generosity, I found from reading that critique of Reisner's paper came across but it didn't end there. It created this kind of firestorm because Charles Spezzano wrote a response, in *Psychoanalytic Psychology* to you where he said ... Oh, the name

of it was quite ... Actually the name, the title of the paper was the most interesting part of the paper. He said, "The Holt 45 Misfires," (*laughter*) and that was the only thing interesting about the paper.

And then you – and then you responded in turn to this, to his paper and again, I went through cause it was so ... If you want it ... This is your generosity also. There was not ... I didn't detect any kind of viciousness in this kind of response. And actually just to hear some of your writing, which I just think is – this is what you say in the response. You say, "What is lacking here - about Reisner's paper - what is lacking here from my vantage point, the very heart of the matter, concern for objective intellectual standards of scholarly work. To one who, like myself, feels that in the long run, our discipline is ill served by tolerance for bad scholarship however lovingly empathic, it is a regrettable necessity to label it as such." That's what you – and that is not, it's not personal. It's simply about the work. And again, this – all these were coming out in '92.

Another thing came out in '92, this year – none of you realize how important a year this was. The other thing that came out in '92 was Morris - The Man - Eagle, who also I'd been reading, wrote ... He published the first public response to "Reuben Fine's rubbish review of Bob's book (*Freud Reappraised, 1989*) ... You wrote in your book, "Freud Reappraised" and Fine had written a response and critiques it saying that it was old news, it wasn't updated. You wrote, again, in Morris's style, this is the title of Morris' paper, "Fine did not review Holt's book." (*laughter*). And Morris goes on to write

about the ways in which ..., that it's clear that Fine was more interested in defending psychoanalysis than actually taking on the ideas and the thoughtfulness in which Bob took them up. Again, all in '92.

And then - by the way I'm tracking this and I'm reading all these things as a graduate student and quite excited about it all because by this time I had – I was late, I was finishing up my clinical, my PhD and I was reading, preparing for my own written exams. So your books were very important. For instance we studied in detail, *Methods in Clinical Psychology*, the volume about the TAT, the Rorschach, all that work was part of our, part of my training. And you were – I had not met you but you were larger than life to someone like me. I read very closely and watched very closely. In short, as my boys would say, you were "The Bomb." Back when I was in graduate school - someone I followed all along.

Now I hadn't met you at this point but it seemed to me that you reminded me of a lot of my own mentors at the time, Herb Schlesinger and Dave Shapiro, these – they didn't, there was not, it didn't seem to me ever mean-spirited but there was a requirement for clear thinking. That you ... If you were going to present something, they were going to challenge you in certain ways to be clear. It wasn't personal and they would be quite kind to you after but you had to be clear if you were gonna take up time and present your ideas. This was exactly the tradition ... That seems to be the same tradition that you were in and what you offered actually the field it seems to me.

And one more thing about 1992, this all happened the same year. And that's '92; I arrived in Dartmouth, my internship to Dartmouth to the Austen Riggs Center in '92 to begin my four-year post-doc as a post-doc. Now ... So I was 27, I'd just finished my Ph.D., my internship and come here and I had to impress the new, the big people at Austen Riggs. A place I'd known about for many years.

And so this was probably my second, my first or second year, I was in a clinical staff meeting and I began to discuss your paper, basically just taking parts of it about the problems of psychoanalysis and some of the senior people noticed, they said, "Hey, you know you could – why don't you invite Bob Holt here? Maybe he could teach us a lot about what you're raising." I said, "You know I'll do that,". You know acting kind of, yeah, I'll do that, sure, I can ... You know I'd never met Bob.

I said, "Yeah, yeah, I'll invite, yeah, I'll give him a call." You know because I was very eager to impress all of my new senior people. So what'd I do? I simply wrote him. Within days he responded to me, a lovely letter, said, "I'd love to come out to Stockbridge and I'll present what you're talking about." Very generous. And so imagine the thrill when I sat in front of the table with Bob Holt, introduced him to all the senior members of the Austen Riggs staff and he was so generous, so kind. He never let on, "I don't even know this guy."

Next to me, he was so generous and kind to me and it meant the world to me. And then since then, over the years since joining Rapaport-Klein and being part of it throughout all these years. You've always taken a keen interest in my work and been so supportive to me always, every year said, "So Craig what are you working on now?" And we – early on it was more empirical stuff but later became complexity theory and my math models and lo

and behold, Bob knew as much as I did about it. And would tell me, "Oh, you should go here and look at this," and always so supportive.

And when I wrote ..., when I presented five years ago a paper, again, I would post them on the web site. And in my experience you get one of two responses to the things you write from your colleagues. One is, "I liked it," which means that they didn't disagree but they're not going to generate a response or, "It was very interesting," which means they didn't agree with you but they didn't muster the energy to want actually to respond to you. Those are the two responses in my experience you get.

Not with Bob. In my ... When I present to the group, it must have been 2004, five years ago or so, I arrived and Bob said, "Craig, I read your paper." I said, "Okay," and I figured it was gonna be like, "I liked it" or "It was interesting". He said, "We've gotta meet. We've gotta meet." I said, "Oh, okay," I said, "Do you have a few comments?" It wasn't a few comments. He had marked every page in my paper. He had written in detailed account of where he wanted me to go with it; but again it was very supportive, very helpful and extremely generous. And it was just so, it was just so heartwarming and encouraging that you took such interest over the years actually in what I was doing in my work and were always so supportive. So thank you Bob - for helping me launch my career at Austen Riggs, making me feel like a big man on campus and then also for the support over the years you've been terrific.

Bob Holt:

But you know one of the things that I think a lot of you forget in all this is that these are always two-way interactions. And I get so much from you guys in a contact like that. The opportunity to interact with someone who was smart, who has good ideas, who will listen to criticism, who will follow up on suggestions is very gratifying. And the experience in the Research Center was like that in so many ways.

You know I mean I feel just extraordinarily privileged to have had the kind of staff, the kind of young people that we had. You can't have a great discussion with a few senior people and a bunch of dolts sitting there nodding their heads, you know? We had, I don't know how, but we had you guys, a lot of you who responded, who took up ideas, who disagreed, and who had notions of your own. And it was just tremendously gratifying and exciting. So it was all a two-way street and don't forget it.

And you know, you – this kind of response brings out the best in a teacher. So I might say about my best, that I got it from a lot of great teachers myself. You know, I had the extraordinary good fortune to go to Harvard at a time when I could work with Bob White, who was in a way a lot like the person you've been talking about. (*laughter*). He had the kind of calm, empathic, gentle, intellectually rigorous style that I enormously admired and wanted to emulate.

And he and Harry (Henry) Murray ran the Harvard Psychological Clinic in much the way that George (Klein) and I did. Harry was full of ideas. Harry was always charismatic and going off on all sorts of marvelous tangents; and Bob was methodical, calm, holding things together and I knew I couldn't be like Harry but I tried to be like Bob. And I think George and I managed to pull it off in much the way that they did.

I enormously admired and envied George's charisma and George's capacity to constantly come up with new and exciting ideas before we had finished working on what we had started. And I was constantly saying, "But you know we really need to keep following up these important leads that we've uncovered."

So we complimented each other I think and don't forget that that dual kind of leadership was what made the Research Center what it was. And it always seemed to me that they – the virtues I had - were much more conventional and plodding and unexciting, even if necessary.

Doris Silverman: I hope this has changed your mind, the things that we're saying. Herb wants to talk now.

Herb Schlesinger: Its' been marvelous hearing everybody say the very things I was going to say. I didn't write them down so I could show them to you, all these marvelous things you've quoted about Bob, but I want to take some of the credit for that.

I think I'm the only surviving member of Bob's first class in 1946 and I think Roy Schafer is still around but I don't think anybody else is. If anybody else is still alive, I wish they'd keep quiet; they're not here. (*laughter*).

All these wonderful things that you're hearing about, of course they began at Harvard or maybe even earlier. But in Topeka, right after World War II, when some of us came back after four years in

the military, making the world a better for democracy, we were hungry for education.

And when I went back to Kings County where I had picked up some clinical training. It wasn't anything formal, we sort of interned. I picked up dropped Rorschach cards - it was one of my functions. And listened here and there and tried to be useful. Boy, I figured out that clinical psychology was a waste of time cause it could all be done before with a four-fold table. In Psychiatry, either you shocked 'em or you didn't, you hospitalize 'em or you didn't, that was it. (*laughter*). Except that there were the Machovers there. Saul and Karen. And Karen Machover could do wonders with her draw a picture, draw a man test –

Doris Silverman: Right.

Herb Schlesinger: it was wonderful and fanciful. She saw things I didn't even know existed, but they were there. She said so and pointed right at the picture.

When I came back after World War II saying I wanted to go to graduate school, "Where you gonna go?" "Yale." "Why Yale?" Well, because I want a sweater with a "Y". I had no better idea than that, I said. You like rats?" "Well sorta," "Then you have to go to Topeka." "Why Topeka?"

They took out two red volumes from the Macy Foundation and put them (*slam*) on the table, "That's why." That was impressive. Those are the two volumes that Rapaport and Gill and Mayman had put together on diagnostic testing, and that's why you have to go to Topeka. Where's Topeka? (*laughter*) It's right after Chicago.

Morris Eagle: Gill and Schafer, Not Mayman.

Herb Schlesinger: Oh, Chicago, I know that. That's civilized, so I found myself ... after a while, we met, Bob. I don't think you remember it, but in those days you had to go for interviews to be admitted there. And no one was dumb enough to think we'd go to Topeka for interviews. So we went to Philadelphia where the APA was meeting in that year, in 1946, and there in the heat of the summer, we were tested by one after another of the faculty there. I frankly ... I couldn't make sense of it. It was a little boring and finally got around to Rapaport who was a little tired. And he said, do you mind if we take a little walk?

Paul Lippmann: Do you mind what?

Herb Schlesinger: “Do you mind if we take a little walk? Do you mind if we stop for a malted,” he said. So we stopped for a malted, went back to the hotel room, (He) said, “What’s this? You want to come here?” And I said, “I don’t particularly want to come to Topeka; I’m already accepted at NYU. In fact, I’m not interested in clinical psychology; I’m interested in research. I wanna know how a mind works, particularly how... why people see the world differently.”

People must see perception individually. I went to the hospital to find out how crazy people see the world. That’s the extent of my interest in clinical psychology. He says, “Oh.” Since I figured I’d ruined it, I didn’t have to go Topeka after all, I could go to NYU. Next thing I know I was accepted. That was the very thing they wanted to hear, somebody interested in research.

So I ended up in Bob’s lap as it were in Topeka where we ... I think the first golden age of Topeka began roughly that year, with all the psych ... 100 psychiatrists and 10 psychologists all coming here to learn from Menninger, and Holt and Gill and Rapaport and Escalona and .. I forget who else was there ... Knight, Pious - people whose names sadly now are written in stone here and there - literally.

Anyway Bob, it was a wonderful time as you remember. Bob was not only science; he brought us culture too. It was a little like an Analytic ghetto. You were in the middle ... in the middle of Topeka. There wasn’t very much there other than the Menninger Foundation and the railroad at that time. Acheson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad in Santa Fe and we were the industry. There wasn’t very much to do there. Bob helped bring us foreign movies with Margret Brenman. And we had a fine arts society that I took over after many years and brought chamber music to the Midwest. And it was simply a wonderful place to live. I came out there for a year with a return ticket and stayed for 23. (*chuckles*).

But anyway, to learn the TAT from Bob, fresh from Murray was a marvelous experience. Several of us, we were kind of brash, mostly City College, Brooklyn College boys, so not very respectful of authority. And what I wanted to add here is that you ..., the man you so cherished at NYU (Bob Holt) was sharpened on the grindstone of us students in Topeka, Kansas. We put a fine edge on that intellect of Bob Holt’s.

I remembered him as a critic - the first time anybody read my work seriously. And it came back all redlined, but also with generosity. And I remember one remark that stayed with me of praise all through these years and that was, "Herb, I think this time you've exceeded your powers of organization." (*laughter*).

That was a comment I cherished.

I had been told by others that my reach exceeded my grasp; but I wasn't a very grasping person - so I didn't feel that achievement amounted to very much. But my powers of organization, to exceed that - well that was really successful. (*laughter*). So I say that was the most important compliment I've ever received. And come to think of it, maybe it wasn't. It was Bob praising with faint damns, I think.

Anyway, among us students David Rapaport was 'Rappy' of course - and Bob was 'Harvard-Princeton'. We had it backwards, it should have been Princeton-Harvard but it didn't scan so Bob was Harvard-Princeton. "Where's Harvard-Princeton; Oh, he's over there". You (Bob) may not have heard that probably as a nickname. Something new.

Bob Holt: Yeah.

Herb Schlesinger: This meeting comes at a very propitious time, because I'm working now on the problem of denial and, of course, that brings up the problem of reality - What are you denying in reality? What is this reality we're denying? Gets very complicated. Not a simple thing at all.

I'm finding, Bob, your 1965, your article on ego autonomy very useful to open up the question of how we deal with the relativity of reality in any way that makes sense, that doesn't wash out the whole topic. So reading that in connection with the primary process book now is really ..., it's quite a sandwich - with a lot of years in between.

And so I want to end this with kinda hoping that we can spend some time on the primary process, not in an informal way but give you the seriousness I think the topic deserves. Because re-reading your first chapter many, many times - I'm only halfway through but I read the beginning several times - and each paragraph I agree with and the next one takes it back.

Morris Eagle(?): That's a very clever way of getting Bob back.

Herb Schlesinger: Sorry?

Bert Freedman: That may be the way of getting Bob to come back next year.

Herb Schlesinger: Well if he comes back I'll look forward to being invited back. Thank you so much Bob - for being everything you are.

Bob Holt: Thank you. Well wow –

Doris Silverman: Sum it up.

Bob Holt: Well, of course, when I was talking about my mentors, it's rather surprising that I didn't mention David Rapaport but ... David was a big mouthful to assimilate, you know? And I guess I use the oral metaphor because I certainly did try to swallow him whole. I mean I tried as much as I could. I admired him so much and I was so traumatized by the initial contact as many of you remember.

His discipline was so unrelenting and his criticism was unsparing - but never destructive. I mean he had a way of pointing out every defect that was there in your grasp or in your little efforts. But in a way that helped you improve and that was an enormously helpful thing to me and I decided in effect, well I've got to do that. I've gotta learn to be like this guy. So it was a wonderful experience of – as I say again, a traumatic one in a number of respects but, gee, he was so generous, you know? He marked up my papers in the way that I marked up yours.

Herb Schlesinger: If you've never been corrected by a Hungarian. Had you English corrected by a Hungarian ... That's frightening (?).

Bob Holt: Right. But I mean he was legendary for that and I simply followed in his footsteps. But I remember when he wrote the big monograph on – what was it, _____

Dave Wolitzky: *Systematizing Psychoanalytic Theory*. The (1959) Koch volume.

Bob Holt: Yeah, for the Koch volume. And so I took that as a great challenge to see what I could do to help his English on the one hand, which obviously that was one thing I could do better than he could. But also to make sure that every idea was clearly expressed and would be grasped by people the way he wanted it to be. And so I worked over the stuff a great deal. And he offered me co-authorship, which I – it's funny, I'm just so moved (*tears*). I mean it was extraordinary, so generous. Of course I couldn't accept it. Well I

mean obviously I'm not responding just to that but to everything you guys said.

Doris Silverman: We thank you Bob. We all thank you. (*Paul Lippmann-background*) So much.

Bob Holt: Well thank you.

Paul Lippmann: My God, its impossible to ... it's impossible to think about the Rapaport-Klein, second weekend in June, without Bob here at the table and we expect and hope not only in our bloodstream but in person that we'll have the joy of having him. And we thank you to Joan also for every ounce of every part of this life, this extraordinary life that we're celebrating. Thank you very much Joan and Bob from all of us.

Bob Holt: I guess I've said nonverbally (*laughter*) better than I could in words how grateful I am.

Paul Lippmann: I think a short break, 10 minutes and reconvene to listen to the next speaker.

Bob Holt: Wow, its quite an experience.

[End of Audio]
