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Editor's Column

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Editor's Column

Gregory B. Sullivan, M.D.

All our lives long, every day and every hour, we are engaged in the process of accommodating our changed and unchanged selves to changed and unchanged surroundings; living, in fact, is nothing else than this process of accommodation; when we fail in it a little we are stupid, when we fail flagrantly we are mad, when we suspend it temporarily we sleep, when we give up the attempt altogether we die. In quiet, uneventful lives the changes internal and external are so small that there is little or no strain in the process of fusion and accommodation; in other lives there is great strain, but there is also great fusing and accommodating power; in others great strain with little accommodating power. A life will be successful or not, according as the power of accommodation is equal to or unequal to the strain of fusing and adjusting internal and external changes.

Samuel Butler (1)

As the *Jefferson Journal of Psychiatry* continues in its early growth phase, having accomplished a successful synthesis to become a national publication, we note its own apparent power of accommodation equal to the strain of fusing and adjusting internal and external changes.

Psychiatric residency in itself demands such accommodation. A group of finishing second year residents were taking stock of the first half of this process: They noted the difficulty in reconciling their initial conceptions and intentions with the subsequent realization of the limits to knowledge or intervention; they called this *disillusionment*. Others spoke of a converse strengthening as better insight into the range of their abilities made them observe more clearly, act with more leverage. This is also *disillusionment* in the more positive sense.

My dictionary lists the dual meanings "to disenchant; to free from illusion," but presents them in tandem without comment on the disparity, as if there were no clearer vision without disaffection. To this I take exception, and cite our personal experiences as we traverse residency, as well as the record of this Journal.

I believe the Journal can foster the positive disillusionment of our fellow psychiatric trainees. To accomplish this, residents must free themselves first from the illusion that they have nothing to communicate, nor the means to do so. We thus thank this issue's and all previous contributors for their illumination not only on the specific subject they've chosen to address, but on the process of contributing to a collective effort of self-education.

REFERENCE

1. Butler, S: *The Way of All Flesh*, as cited in Cheigny, H: *My Eyes Have a Cold Nose*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1946