Psychic Transformations: Theory and Technique, Then and Now.

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THE PSYCHOANALYTIC CURE

FREUD ---- emphasized the content over process

PRESENT ---- greater focus on psychic process & T-CT play
THERAPEUTIC ACTION: Contemporary Developments

Donald Winnicott
symbolism of play → experience of play
Contemporary Psychoanalytic Theories of Therapeutic Action

- Pluralistic View
- multiple mutative pathways
  - interpretative mechanisms
  - non-interpretative factors
Interpretation versus Relationship Debate

- Insight $\rightarrow$ Change? OR New Relationship $\rightarrow$ Change?

- Waning of this debate

- Interpretation and Relationship operate synergistically
Early Primacy of Interpretation as Change Agent

- **Sigmund Freud**
  - interpretation: recovery of repressed memories

- **Hannah Segal (1962)**
  - “insight is a precondition of any lasting personality change achieved in analysis...To be of therapeutic value, it must be correct and it must be deep enough.”

- **Blatt and Behrend (1987)**
  - “Interpretation leading to understanding is assumed by most analysts to be the primary mutative force in psychoanalysis”
No-interpretative Elements of Change

- **James Strachey (1934)**
  - "Mutative Interpretations"
  - important influence of therapeutic relationship

- **Hans Loewald (1960)**
  - shift to earlier developmental stages
  - analogy: mother-child relationship
  - current development $\rightarrow$ potential organization

- **Joseph and Anne-Marie Sandler (1983)**
  - "The analyst has to provide, through his interpretations and the way he gives them, an atmosphere of the infantile, the perverse, and the ridiculous, an atmosphere which the patient can make part of his own attitudes towards himself, which he can internalize along with the understanding he has reached in his joint work with the analyst."
The ‘Dance’ on the Analytic Stage: Experienced and Interpreted

- Freud, *Remembering, Repeating and Working Through*
- Projective Identification
- Transference-Countertransference
THE ANALYTIC FIELD

Madeleine and Willy Baranger (Argentina) *The Analytic Field*

Serge Viderman (France) *The Analytic Space*

Thomas Ogden (United States) *The Analytic Third*

Antonino Ferro (Italy) *The Oneiric Field*
Relational Contributions: Non-verbal Exchanges

- Parent-infant dyad as analogy
- non-verbal behaviors in background
- intersubjective sharing & understanding
Infant Brain Research

Advances in Neuroscience

- Empirical Evidence for Clinical Impressions

Growth of Infant’s Brain

- Affect Signaling between Mother & Infant
- Firing of Mirror Neurons
Mirror Neurons

- In the motor cortex

- Fire in association
  - To one’s own actions
  - To another person’s actions
  - To Sounds or smells signifying an action

(Galese, 2005)
Mirror Neurons

- Creates a mirror image inside one person that echoes the inside of the other

- The neurological basis for “a shared manifold of intersubjectivity”

(Galese, 2005)
The Interpersonal Unconscious

- Multiple Ucs registers
- Via non-verbal communication
- Infant brain responds to parental affect
Dynamic Memory Systems

- **Declarative System**
  - Autobiographical Memory
  - Repressed
  - Can be verbalized & interpreted

- **Procedural Unconscious**
  - Implicit Memory
  - Never repressed
  - Implicit Relational Knowing
Shifts in Implicit Relational Knowing

- “Moments of Meeting” as reorganizers (Daniel Stern)
- Depends on interpersonal experience
- Verbalization or interpretation unnecessary
Realizing Therapeutic Changes: Technical Strategies

• Promote Insight
• Leverage Therapeutic Relationship
• Employ Secondary Interventions
• Dreaming in the Analytic Field
1. Free Association
   • Observe defenses
   • Window behind defenses
   • Notice resistance

2. Interpretation
   • Wishes, fears, fantasies
   • Defenses, conflicts
   • Transference themes
Leveraging Therapeutic Relationship

• Associational Networks are Modified
• Internalization of
  • Analytic Function
  • Analytic Attitude
  • Conscious Strategies for Self-Reflection
• Transference-Countertransference
Employing Secondary Strategies

• Confrontation
  • Patterns of Behavior (Suggestion)
  • Dysfunctional Beliefs

• Address Conscious Decision-Making
  • Mutual Problem-Solving

• Exposure

• Facilitative Techniques
Dreaming in the Analytic Field

“The session takes place in terms of oneiric reciprocity, both when the patient dreams the analyst’s intervention or mental state, and when the analyst dreams the response to the patient. The more that the response is dreamed, the more it will be a factor in the constitution or the reparation of possible defectiveness of the patient’s alpha function.”

Antonino Ferro
The Mysterious Leap of Soma Into Psyche
Models of the Mind

1. EXPLICIT THEORIES
   conscious &/or preconscious

2. IMPLICIT THEORIES
   unconscious
“What is explicit and implicit both find their way into the unconscious portion of countertransference, and shapes the way we understand and interpret the material.”

Marilia Aisenstein
The Psychosomatic Symptom as an ‘undreamt dream’....

Marilia Aisenstein
“Undreamable experience – whether it be the consequence of predominantly external or intrapsychic forces – remains with the individual as undreamt dreams in such forms as psychosomatic illness.”

Joyce McDougall
An ‘Undreamt Dream’

“A dream (that) remains timelessly suspended in a no-man’s land where there is neither imagination nor reality, neither forgetting nor remembering, neither sleeping nor waking up.”

Thomas Ogden
“Being awake is overrated.”

Wilfred Bion
"Patients vary in their talent for ... relating (their dreams) vividly, while analysts vary in their talent for envisaging the patient’s dream."

Donald Meltzer
"to refer not only to those psychological states that clearly reflect the analyst’s active receptivity to the unconscious of the analysand, but also to a motley collection of psychological states that seem to reflect the analyst’s narcissistic self-absorption, obsessional rumination, daydreaming, sexual fantasizing, and so on."

Thomas Ogden
“Transference is an odd phenomenon. It is the most powerful spring in the cure: the decisive part of the work depends on it. This striking phenomenon, an expression of the unconscious and the id, is also the only tool we possess to access it.”

Marilia Aisenstein
THE COUNTERTRANSFERENCE

James Grotstein

"Introspectively Identifying"
EXORCISM

James Grotstein

*metaphor of shaman or exorcistic cleric*
“Psychoanalysis opens up thought processes and enables the subject to reintegrate into the chain of psychic events even something unthinkable, such as the appearance of a lethal illness....Analysis can lead patients to see themselves as subjects of their own thoughts and even of their own suffering. This is perhaps the human being’s only inalienable freedom.”

Marilia Aisenstein
REFERENCES

• Gabbard G., Western D: Rethinking Therapeutic Action. Int. J. Psychoanalysis. 84:823-841. 2003
