

Welcome to the Sunday part of “Our Practice Today: Treatment and Transformation.”

I am Dr. Margery Quackenbush, the Executive Director of the National Association for the Advancement of Psychoanalysis. NAAP was founded in 1972 by a group of analysts led by Dr. Phyllis Meadow. Meadow’s goal was to unite the analytic schools of thought and to set standards for member institutes.

Today our members come from many disciplines – medicine, psychology, social work, art, philosophy, sociology, literature, music, law, theology, education, history, nursing, and others.

I am pleased that Dr. Ahron Friedberg asked me to introduce the moderators this morning. I have an abiding interest and have taught courses in neuropsychanalysis. Today we will learn more about it as well as more about the uses of technology in psychoanalysis.

This morning we have two panels.

The first is: Neuropsychanalysis: Mind and Matter: chaired by Dr. Michael Silverman

The second is: Without Walls: moderated by Dr. Philip Luloff

Freud is dead but here we are resuscitating him with neuropsychanalysis and Skype.

Neuropsychanalysis is the building of bridges between psychoanalysis, neuroscience, psychology and psychiatry.

Skype is a software application that allows users to make voice calls over the internet. You can actually view the person you are speaking to.

It is important for the field of psychoanalysis to study neuroscience.

Freud, as a neurologist, was very much interested in the connection between the neurological and the experiential. He wanted to understand how the two interrelated.

The roots of the field of psychoanalysis began with Freud’s interest in neurology. Now psychoanalysis is being revisited with neuroscience and Skype.

Freud wrote in “A Project for a Scientific Psychology” in 1895 that the nervous system has two functions. The reception of stimuli from outside and the discharge of excitation of internal organs.

One of Freud’s basic observations was that consciousness can look both inward and outward. Inward within us in the form of mental experience, feelings, desires, fantasies, dreams and the like. Outward to register events going on outside of us in the form of material objects, the data of our external sensory organs.

In 1914 in “On Narcissism” Freud wrote “we must recollect that all of our provisional ideas in psychology will presumably one day be based on an organic substructure.”

Dr. Arnold Pfeffer, for whom the Arnold Pfeffer Center for Neuropsychanalysis at the New York Psychoanalytic Institute is named, wrote in 2000 “Freud, in his 1895 ‘Project for a Scientific Psychology,’ attempted to join the emerging discipline of psychoanalysis with the neuroscience of his time. Freud was forced, through lack of pertinent knowledge, to abandon his project.”

Today the Pfeffer Center brings together noted neuroscientists to speak on the groundbreaking work now being conducted in neuroscience in many universities and research centers.

Dr. Eric Kandel, a leading neuroscientist, who won the Nobel Prize in medicine and physiology for his studies of the long-term changes in the brain that underlie memory and mood, has written that professional requirements for future psychoanalysts will demand a greater knowledge of the structure and functioning of the brain.

Understanding the human mind in biological terms has emerged as the central challenge for science in the twenty-first century.

“We want to understand the biological nature of perception, learning, memory, thought, consciousness, and the limits of free will.” This is a quote from “In Search of Memory” by Eric Kandel.

Dr. Mark Solms, a neuroscientist, as well as a psychoanalyst, said that psychoanalysis is a study of the mind. There are things that one can see about the mind by studying it from the viewpoint of subjective experience that one cannot see by looking at the brain as an organ. Neuroscience studies the mind from the point of view of what can be observed about it on the outer surface of consciousness, the mind as an organ, a physical object.

By using neurological applications we may come to more reliable conclusions about what the true component parts of the mind are, and thereby to a model of what the structure of the mind might be.

It is not only a matter of how psychoanalysis can benefit from this sort of dialogue but also what psychoanalysis may be able to offer to the neurosciences.

Dr. Jay Harris, a panelist today, wrote “the combined findings of cognitively and psychoanalytically informed neuroscience can be a force for human and moral good.”

Kandel has called for cooperation between neuroscientists and psychoanalysts.

Now to our second topic: WITHOUT WALLS

Today people are communicating in a global way. In the United States psychoanalysis may be struggling for recognition in the hospitals where psychopharmacology holds sway and in the courts, where the predominant theory that dictated decisions was based on

psychoanalytic theory, and decisions are now based on cognitive behavioral theory. In other parts of the world such as Argentina, and Italy, psychoanalysis has a strong following.

Countries like Korea and China are now becoming interested in psychoanalysis. We are taking our psychoanalytic knowledge to countries where there is now an interest.

Psychoanalysts are working outside the walls of our countries. In this country we are working with foreign patients. Foreign students come here to train and bring back knowledge to start institutes of their own.

For example, Dr. Elise Snyder, one of the panelists today, uses Skype and video-conferencing technology to work with patients and students in China. Her organization – CAPA - China American Psychoanalytic Alliance - has more applicants than they can teach.

The Chinese say “We hope this won’t upset you and we are most grateful for all that you are teaching us, but eventually China will have to develop its own kind of psychoanalysis.”

According to Annette Vaccaro, a psychoanalyst who is a member of NAAP, video conferencing through programs such as Skype and WebEx expand our capacities to keep connected and deepen attachments in an ever changing, evolving society where people are in motion and in transit around a world that becomes more globally accessible daily. It parallels the age in which we live when information and technology can inhibit, motivate, facilitate and become a resistance to intrapsychic communication.

People are interconnected now. We are all connected through social media.