

## THE DEHUMANIZATION OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

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Early in his career as a psychoanalyst, Freud noted that some of his colleagues criticized his case histories because they sounded more like novels than like scientific reports (1895). Freud felt no need to defend himself against the charge. It was true, he admitted; it was true because poets and artists through their intuition and creative imagination can grasp directly the essence of the human condition. As a scientific worker, Freud said, he had to struggle laboriously to apprehend the same material in a disciplined way. The stories of literature and the lives of patients in their essentials have very much in common. In both one can find a unifying element, sometimes only dimly intimated, a recurrent pattern of motive and conflict, a constant struggle with the world, with fate and within one's own self. It is the evolution of this struggle, a struggle forever different yet somehow always the same, that ultimately lends a sense of cohesion and meaning to the personality and crystallizes the individuality of each individual. The interplay of these conflicts remained the focus of Freud's interest and investigation for the rest of his life. Several times Freud changed the terms in which he formulated his understanding of how the forces within the mind align themselves in this inner struggle but the concept of conflict always remained at the center. It was this that led Kris ( ) to

say that psychoanalysis may be defined as human nature seen from the vestage point of conflict.

When Freud's classic, "The Interpretation of Dreams" was first published, it was accorded a hostile reception by the scientific world and a cool reception elsewhere. In a letter to Wilhelm Fleiss dated March 11, 1900 (Kris ) however, Freud was able to report the first breach in the wall of indifference and hostility. A really friendly article had appeared in the Wiener Freudenblatt: a literary critic rather than a physician or a psychologist was the first reviewer to appreciate the significance of this revolutionary work.

This has in fact been typical of the history of psychoanalytic ideas since Freud's time. Because of their aesthetic sensitivity and their intuition, writers and artists have appreciated the relevance of psychoanalysis much sooner and with greater conviction than others. They found psychoanalysis appealing because it is the most human of all the psychologies. It is a scientific psychology with a methodology uniquely its own. Psychoanalysis studies man not as a generic laboratory specimen, artificially sundered from his daily life and divorced from his past, but as a unique individual in the setting of his daily turmoil. No other psychology can make this claim.

It was not an easy task for Freud to find a place for his theories for the rich and varied manifestations of the human passions he observed in his patients. After all, he had been schooled in the tradition of Helmholtz whose disciples

On the occasion of the centenary of Freud's birth, Jones ( ) posed the question: What was Freud's greatest discovery, what was his major contribution? He felt it was in the identification and differentiation of the primary and secondary processes. To me this seems too narrow a compass within which to answer the question. The primary and second processes are, after all, part of a set of inter-related propositions and hypotheses. The question posed by Jones should be answered in broader terms. To me, Freud's major contribution seems to be the "psychoanalytic situation," the special technical device of psychoanalytic therapy and investigation. The early history of psychoanalysis is one of the great adventures of science because it demonstrates so precisely the interaction between the uncovering of new data with advances in theory culminating in the delineation of the psychoanalytic situation. When he finally devised the psychoanalytic situation, Freud developed for psychoanalysis a standard method of operation and in so doing he ushered in the beginning of psychoanalysis as a scientific discipline.

The psychoanalytic situation is constituted in keeping with the fundamental assumptions and findings of psychoanalysis (Arlow and Brenner ). Of these propositions, psychic determinism is the basic one. The concepts of intrapsychic conflict and the dynamic interplay of opposing forces in the mind interacting and effectuating compromises stand in close relationship to the basic concept of determinism although not exactly

identical with it. By contrast, the concept of mental processes operating outside of the realm of consciousness is a secondary proposition. Studied within the context of the psychoanalytic situation, the notion of unconscious conflict may be properly assessed as a derivative one. That is, it can be inferred from the data of observation based on the propositions of dynamic determinism. The genetic approach, a characteristic feature of psychoanalysis, is not a priori assumption but is rather the inevitable consequence of findings which can be reproduced regularly in every analysis. The genetic viewpoint in psychoanalysis is empirically derived from the data of observation.

In psychoanalysis the conditions of communication between the patient and analysand are arranged so as to favor the emergence into consciousness of mental products determined if not exclusively, then at least to the greatest possible degree by the forces persistently and repetitively at work in the mind of the analysand. The thoughts and imagery which the patient reports are derivatives of the specific unconscious conflicts typical for that particular patient. Thus, by its very nature, the psychoanalytic situation is the setting for the study of unconscious conflict and its derivative. In effect, the psychoanalytic situation is deliberately skewed toward that end. The psychoanalytic situation accordingly takes advantage of certain uniquely human qualities. The principal

modality of communication is speech and even where non-verbal elements enter into the interaction, they convey meaning that in the end must be translated into the vocabulary of language. This is very much as Freud (1900) described the work of the analyst in translating the imagery of dreams and of unconscious processes into the vocabulary of everyday speech.

When the analytic process is proceeding favorably the communication between analyst and analysand takes on the quality of an aesthetic experience. Several authors, notably Beres (1957), Kris ( ), Sachs ( ), have called attention to the parallelism that exists between communication in analysis and in the creative process. This resides not only in the fact that the analyst constitutes as it were a one man audience to the analysand's inner searchings; the analytic interaction reflects, in addition, the effects of those exquisitely human attributes of memory, symbol formation and self-awareness, to the end that in the words of Beres, in psychoanalytic therapy as in art, communication reaches its most human expression, the transmission of emotion.

It would be a most valuable experience, I believe, to take a good analytic hour and study it as if it were a piece of literature, a work of art or a musical composition. From the opening phrases which intimate the general theme around which the session would be organized one could proceed through the variations and repetitions of the essential motif, to the contrapuntal play of impulse and resistance, metaphor and fantasy, figures of speech and mechanisms of defense, to the final coda wherein the unconscious wish emerges in terms that

make it ready for interpretation. The ambiguity of aesthetic expression (Kris ) finds its counterpart in the vagueness of the analysand's productions and it becomes the analyst's responsibility to bring meaning to the seeming chaos by closing the unfinished gestalt. Interpretation closes one phase of the creative effort and furnishes the stimulus for the next phase of conjoined analytic creativity. This could be one way to describe the process of "working through."

The process by which the analyst is able to conceptualize the data of the patient's associations and to arrive at an interpretation is an extremely complicated one. For our purposes we may divide it into two phases: the first is aesthetic, intuitive, affective; the second may be considered cognitive, rational and disciplined. The aesthetic phase is intensely personal in its coloring and is related to the processes, introspection, intuition and empathy. The correct interpretation for it, Freud ( ) pointed out, appears in the mind of the analyst in the form of a free association. We become aware of it through the exercise of introspection. The subjective experience, however, is that of knowing the significance of the data without the conscious use of reasoning. This is the essence of intuition. It is a human capacity that operates within and outside of psychoanalysis. When we have the opportunity and the data to delve into the matter further, we can demonstrate that in analysis intuition consists of organizing myriads of observations, impressions, facts, experience - in a word, all we can learn from the patient into a meaningful pattern, but doing all of this outside the scope of consciousness,

without any awareness of the intermediate steps involved. Scientific discoveries and artistic innovations of enormous complexity are known to have originated in the same way. The kind of intuition required in analysis however depends upon another factor, one we hardly understand and which deserves much further study, empathy. Empathy is a kind of unconscious emotional resonance. It is much more than unconscious communication: it is a function antecedent to intuition, a function which activates identical unconscious wishes or fantasies in two or more individuals (Beres and Arlow, 1974). In the realm of art, Sachs ( ) and Kris ( ) indicated that it is this capacity which makes it possible for the poet to stimulate unconscious fantasies shared in common not only by the members of the audience but also with him. The capacity for empathy develops out of the matrix of common experience, at all levels of psychobiological integration and out of the ever present role played by identification in object relations.

While the subjective phase may be the more intriguing and dramatic, the second phase of the interpretive process is equally important. It is cognitive and is based on the exercise of reason and discipline. To validate his intuitive understanding of the patient, the analyst must turn to the data of the analysis. There are certain criteria that help transform what would seem to be random associations of disconnected thoughts into patterns of relevant, meaningful data. Chief among these is the context in which the material appears. Contiguity of elements suggests dynamic relevance. Context and contiguity in psychoanalysis have a broader significance than the simple sequential arrangements

of the patient's observations in time. Context also implies the antecedent events in the analyst particularly in the previous session, the nature of the transference and the concurrent realities of the patient's existence. The daily events stand in relationship to the material of the analytic session as does the day residue to the dream. Other criteria are to be found in the repetition of themes, representation by similarities and opposites, references by allusion, and the convergence of multiple representations into one organizing expression usually an unconscious fantasy. A comprehensive interpretation of analytic material must be characterized by the qualities of consistency and cohesion. The various elements must bear a proper relationship to each other and must be consistent in the most parsimonious way with the data obtained and organized up to that point. Most of these criteria were originally symptomatically delineated by D'Albiez ( ).

Correlating the data of observation in this way produces the kind of findings upon which rests the claim of psychoanalysis as a science. The findings obtained within the psychoanalytic situation by the psychoanalytic method represent the most specific and reliable contribution psychoanalysis has to make to the study of mental life. Such data represent the material on which our generalizations are based and the findings with which the theories and hypotheses we formulate must ultimately be correlated and brought into consonance. In addition they constitute the foundations on which we base our therapeutic rationale. Freud ( ) noted that psychoanalysis is like a pyramid; the clinical findings constitute



the base of the pyramid, the apex is the superstructure of theory. Theory can be altered or discarded as developments require. The clinical findings remain the essence of psychoanalysis.