

reconstruction in adult analysis' (1980). Brenman emphasizes the joint exploration, 'new beginning' aspect of exploring the past that analyst and patient can do together once understanding has been achieved in the immediacy of the transference. Common to all three papers is a view that talk about the past is distant, more intellectual, than experience in the immediacy of the here and now of the transference/counter-transference, but all agree that it can be extremely useful provided it is not used defensively.

Segal, however, does not agree that interpretations about the past are necessarily more intellectual and distant than interpretations about the immediate analyst-patient interaction. In this she is joined by Rosenfeld, who thinks that useful reconstructive interpretations and observations can be brought in whenever they seem relevant and are indeed thought of as an essential component of transference (Rosenfeld 1987).

But in some of his later work Rosenfeld goes further. In the case of traumatized patients he thinks that interpretations in the immediate transference/counter-transference situation are likely to be positively harmful because the patient experiences them as the analyst repeating the behaviour of a self-centred primary object, always demanding to be the centre of the patient's attention and concern (Rosenfeld 1986). He thinks the analyst should concentrate, at least initially, on a sympathetic elucidation of the traumatic events of the past in all their ramifications. Critics of Rosenfeld's view think that the problem of repeating the behaviour of a self-centred parent can be dealt with by interpretation rather than by behaving differently from the parent, and are further concerned that concentrating mainly on elucidation of past traumas may lead to splitting between an idealized analyst and denigrated primary objects, and to a belief by the analyst that he can know what the external reality of the historical past actually was.

Thus after many years of very little explicit discussion about technique it now seems likely that these and similar exchanges among Kleinian analysts will lead to more explicit statements of their various views.

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Notes on memory and desire

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These notes were first published in 1967 in *The Psychoanalytic Forum*, 2: 272-3, 279-80. Several analysts took part in the discussion but only Bion's contribution is reprinted here.

Memory is always misleading as a record of fact since it is distorted by the influence of unconscious forces. Desires interfere, by absence of mind when observation is essential, with the operation of judgement. Desires distort judgement by selection and suppression of material to be judged.

Memory and desire exercise and intensify those aspects of the mind that derive from sensuous experience. They thus promote capacity derived from sense impressions and designed to serve impressions of sense. They deal respectively with sense impressions of what is supposed to have happened and sense impressions of what has not yet happened. Psychoanalytic 'observation' is concerned neither with what has happened nor with what is going to happen but with what is happening. Furthermore it is not concerned with sense impressions or objects of sense. Any psychoanalyst knows depression, anxiety, fear and other aspects of psychic reality whether those aspects have been or can be successfully named or not. These are the psychoanalyst's real world. Of its reality he has no doubt. Yet anxiety, to take one example, has no shape, no smell, no taste; awareness of the sensuous accompaniments of emotional experience are a hindrance to the psychoanalyst's intuition of the reality with which he must be at one.

Every session attended by the psychoanalyst must have no history and no future.

What is 'known' about the patient is of no further consequence: it is either false or irrelevant. If it is 'known' by patient and analyst, it is obsolete. If it is 'known' by the one but not the other, a defence or grid category 2 element (Bion 1963, 1965) is operating. The only point of importance in any session is the unknown. Nothing must be allowed to

distract from intuiting that.

In any session, evolution takes place. Out of the darkness and formlessness something evolves. That evolution can bear a superficial resemblance to memory, but once it has been experienced it can never be confounded with memory. It shares with dreams the quality of being wholly present or unaccountably and suddenly absent. This evolution is what the psychoanalyst must be ready to interpret.

To do this he needs to discipline his thoughts. First and foremost, as every psychoanalyst knows, he must have had as thorough an analysis as possible; nothing said here must be taken as casting doubt on that. Second, he must cultivate a watchful avoidance of memory. Notes should be confined to matters which *can* be recorded — the programme of appointments is an obvious example.

Obey the following rules:

1. *Memory*: do not remember past sessions. The greater the impulse to 'remember' what has been said or done, the more the need to resist it. This impulse can present itself as a wish to remember something that has happened because it appears to have precipitated an emotional crisis: *no* crisis should be allowed to breach this rule. The supposed events must not be allowed to occupy the mind. Otherwise the evolution of the session will not be observed at the only time when it can be observed — while it is taking place.
2. *Desires*: the psychoanalyst can start by avoiding any desires for the approaching end of the session (or week, or term). Desires for results, 'cure' or even understanding must not be allowed to proliferate.

These rules must be obeyed *all* the time and not simply during the sessions. In time the psychoanalyst will become more aware of the pressure of memories and desires and more skilled at eschewing them. If this discipline is followed there will be an increase of anxiety in the psychoanalyst at first, but it must not interfere with preservation of the rules. The procedure should be started at once and not abandoned on any pretext whatever.

The pattern of analysis will change. Roughly speaking, the patient will not appear to develop over a period of time but each session will be complete in itself. 'Progress' will be measured by the increased number and variety of moods, ideas and attitudes seen in any given session. There will be less clogging of the sessions by the repetition of material which should have disappeared and, consequently, a quickened tempo within each session every session.

The psychoanalyst should aim at achieving a state of mind so that at every session he feels he has not seen the patient before. If he feels he

has, he is treating the wrong patient.

This procedure is extremely penetrating. Therefore the psychoanalyst must aim at a steady exclusion of memory and desire and not be too disturbed if the results appear alarming at first. He will become used to it and he will have the consolation of building his psychoanalytic technique on a firm basis of intuiting evolution and *not* on the shifting sand of slight experience imperfectly remembered which rapidly gives way not to experience but to neurologically certain decay of mental faculty. The evolving session is unmistakable and the intuiting of it does not deteriorate. If given a chance it starts early and decays late.

The foregoing is a brief account distilled from putting the precepts advocated into practice. The theoretical implications can be worked out by each psychoanalyst for himself. His interpretations should gain in force and conviction — both for himself and his patient — because they derive from the emotional experience with a unique individual and not from generalized theories imperfectly 'remembered'.

Author's response

The discussants of my 'Notes on memory and desire' help to make it clear that some of the confusion arises through the ambiguity of the terms 'memory' and 'desire'. I realize that it would be helpful if I could distinguish between two different phenomena which are both usually and indifferently called 'memory'. This I have tried to do by speaking of one as 'evolution', by which I mean the experience where some idea or pictorial impression floats into the mind unbidden and as a whole. From this I wish to distinguish ideas which present themselves in response to a deliberate and conscious attempt at recall; for this last I reserve the term 'memory'. 'Memory' I keep for experience related predominantly to sensuous impressions: 'evolution' I regard as based on experience which has no sensuous background but is expressed in terms which are derived from the language of sensuous experience. For example, I 'see', meaning I intuit through the medium of a visual impression.

'Desire' should not be distinguished from 'memory', as I prefer that the terms should represent one phenomenon which is a suffusion of both. I have tried to express this by saying 'memory' is the past tense of 'desire', 'anticipation' being its future tense.

These definitory hypotheses have a limited value, and I suggest that every psychoanalyst should make up his mind for himself by simple experimentation as to what these terms represent. For example, he should school himself to avoid thinking of the end of the session, week or term (having made previous provision for terminating the session at the

correct time as a matter of administration), and when he has done this for a sufficient period without trying to hurry himself, make up his mind about what he would call 'memory' and 'desire'. When he has done this he can proceed to the next stage of extending his suppressions of the experience he has discovered in this way. I must warn psychoanalysts that I do not think they should extend this procedure hurriedly or without discussion with other psychoanalysts with a view to consolidating each step before taking another.

This procedure seems to me to approximate a state which Freud described in a letter to Lou Andreas-Salomé, 25 May 1916: 'I know that I have artificially blinded myself at my work in order to concentrate all the light on the one dark passage.' In my experience this procedure makes it possible to intuit a present 'evolution' and lay the foundations for future 'evolutions'. The more firmly this is done, the less the psychoanalyst has to bother about remembering.

I hope this makes clear some of the points to which Dr French objects, though I am doubtful whether this method should be used if he really feels that he is 'completely unable' to understand. Indeed, I would not 'desire' anyone to employ this approach unless, like Dr Lindon, he feels it has some meaning for him.

The experience which Dr Lindon describes appears to me to afford the foundation for exploring the whole question of psychoanalytic observation. I agree with his feeling that 'memory' and 'desire' are obstacles intervening between the psychoanalyst and the emotional experience of the session. When it is considered how little opportunity even five sessions a week affords the psychoanalyst, any obstacle to appreciation becomes serious.

Dr González draws attention to a defect of which I am very conscious. My own feeling is that my views have 'evolved', and although this must mean they have changed, I think the 'change' less significant than the 'evolution'. I think the expressions he rightly quotes from *Elements of Psycho-Analysis* are wrongly framed, but wrong though the formulations now seem to me to be, they were good enough to lead me to my present formulations which I think are better. In particular, I think the use of language based on the experience of the senses led me to fail to recognize that one does not in fact 'see' (feel, touch, smell, etc.) anxiety. I hope that my experience will be repeated by others who have tried to read these earlier formulations. If it is, I shall feel less remorseful.

I hope that my quotation from Freud will convince Dr Brierley that I am attempting to elaborate on the importance of rapport. I feel some unease if it is suggested that I am departing from psychoanalytic technique, not because I have any objection to innovation if it seems to be necessary, but because it is unlikely that the intuitions of experienced

psychoanalysts can be lightly laid aside. I do hope, however, that the points I make may help psychoanalysts to think themselves into closer contact with the psychoanalytic experience.

Darwin expressed the view that judgement was inimical to observation, but, as Dr Brierley points out, the psychoanalyst has to formulate judgements while observations are being made. I hope the distinction I have tried to draw between 'evolution' and 'memory' may help to meet her objections. I believe it would go some way towards meeting Dr Herskovitz's objection to 'illogicalities'. I do in any case feel doubts about the value of a logical theory to represent the realizations of psychoanalysis. I think the 'logical' theory and the 'illogicalities' of the psychoanalytic experience should be permitted to coexist until the observed disharmony is resolved by 'evolution'.

References

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