

PREFACE

In this book we document our longstanding work concerning the subject of psychoanalytical single case research.

Systematic and broadly conceived empirical studies of individual psychoanalytic cases are rare. Many publications advise conducting individual systematic studies; yet few provide an example of their own. Obviously this is easier said than done. In the early seventies we familiarized us the state of theoretical and empirical psychoanalytic research. It was necessary to screen the methodically orientated works that at the time were still rare. This includes the epoch-making work of Gottschalk & Auerbach (1966) looking for directions which way to go. The rich paper by Wallerstein and Sampson (1971) reinforced our decision to choose the single case research approach. A thorough study of the first edition of the “Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behaviour Change” by Bergin & Garfield (1971), containing Luborsky’s and Spence’s (1971) evaluation of “quantitative research on psychoanalytic therapy” were helpful. These inputs lead to our first reports concerning the field of psychoanalytic therapy research. At the beginning of our endeavour we received support by correspondence with Hans Strupp, Donald Spence, Lester Luborsky and Hartvig Dahl. This brought us into contact with the newly founded Society for Psychotherapy Research (SPR), which with its yearly conferences became an increasingly more important forum for scientific exchange. The first international conference about psychoanalytic process research that could be conducted in Ulm 1985, with the support of the German Research Foundation and took place prior to the Hamburg IPA-congress. This documented the fruitful exchange of the American psychoanalytic researchers with the German participants. The works presented by Bucci, Dahl, Gill, Luborsky and others concerning the psychoanalytic treatment of Mrs. C, which was conducted by Dahl himself under the supervision of Arlow could be compared with our own first studies of the treatment of Amalia X. Dahl (1988a) in his introduction to the report published three years later – known by insiders as the ‘blue book’ - characterizes the paradigmatic achievement of this conference as follows:

“This is a book about the future that we hope will arouse the curiosity of clinicians and point a direction for researchers. It marks the surprisingly rapid evolution of psychodynamic psychotherapy research from an applied towards a basic science” (p. VII).

The prognosis was corroborated in so far as psychoanalytic treatment research became a field that attracted surprisingly many psychoanalytically oriented colleagues worldwide. The time

questioning whether or not such extra-clinical research on clinical material is necessary and doable was definitively over.

Content

Following an introductory chapter to the main topic of the volume, “Psychoanalytical Therapy Process Research,” two chapters were prepared to identify the salient issues for our work. Chapter 2, first published in 1973 in German, two years later in English, presents the meta-scientific controversies of the seventies; as they are still relevant today we have now up-to-dated this work by preliminary remarks. Chapter 3 traces the fate of single case reports in clinical psychoanalytic research. In chapter 4, our paradigmatic case, the patient Amalia X, is introduced. A comprehensive overview, in the form of a longitudinal and cross sectional portrayal about her psychoanalytical therapy, is provided. In chapters 5 guided clinical judgment studies are presented and chapter 6 reports on our efforts to implement computer-based content analyses.

The individual chapters of this volume mention the main and the co-authors of the original publications which were, in a larger part, often published in the English language. We revised all the manuscripts; we partially shortened the text and where it seemed necessary we updated it.

A final impulse to collect this work of the Ulm Psychoanalytic Process Research Study Group in a single volume was the invitation of Hartvig Dahl. He invited members of the Ulm group to the George Klein Forum in the framework of the Midwinter Meetings of the American Psychoanalytic Association 1997. There the senior author, the treating analyst of the patient Amalia X, documented his deep involvement in the undertaking. It turned out that adding a third editor from the US, Joseph Schachter, proved to enrich our own debates.

The collection of materials compiled in this volume should also be looked at as an invitation open for further studies on the specimen case. The records and transcripts are available to any serious student of psychoanalysis.

This volume is dedicated to Ms Amalia X. Her consent to the usage of the verbatim recordings enabled us to do this research. We also thank the German Research Foundation (DFG), which supported this work for many years. For the helpful suggestions provided by our friends and colleagues we are especially grateful.

The English translation has been performed by H. Spiegel (chap. 2.2-2.9), by P. Luborsky (chap. 2.1 & 3), by J. Krampen (chap. 1, 4, 5, 6 & 7). All materials were finally edited by J. Schachter.

Ulm – New York 2007

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