

THE ANALYTIC ATTITUDE

sics of her state of being in love, to come to light; and from these will herself open the way to the infantile roots of her love" (p.). One does, of course, want to help open up this way to the infant, for it is a fundamental aspect of carrying out an analysis. However, the project of progressively making the analysis safe is obviously more complex than showing that one is proof against libidinal temptation.

Far more than frankly heterosexual demands are in question when a speaks of the temptations besetting the analyst. The analyst must prove against temptations of every sort in every aspect of carrying out an effective analysis. To mention only a few other temptations: there is the masochistic analyst's "seduction of the aggressor" (Reisenstein, 1957); there is the temptation to enter into a bitter power struggle when the analyst shows the full force of his or her negative transference; there are seductions away from an empathic stance; and there are seductions into panic as when regressive self-experience is dramatically displayed.

In developing a reading of Freud's technical papers around the theme of safety, one runs a considerable but, I think, unavoidable risk of tediously reviewing what is already well known and has already been adequately reviewed and discussed in the literature. One hesitates to attempt to go beyond Leo Stone's excellent monograph, *The Psychoanalytic Situation* (1961), or Greenson's text (1967). Nor can one avoid the risk of reading more into Freud's words than he could have intended at that stage of his development. One also runs the risk of trying to recommend an indiscriminately adulatory attitude toward Freud—the Freud who "knew it all," as is sometimes said. Well, I do believe that Freud already knew much that we now pride ourselves on knowing only just come to know, even though he did not know it, and would not have known it, in quite the way that we do today. And really there is the risk of giving the impression that the atmosphere of safety was Freud's sole or major concern. It was not so. My claim is only that it was a steady concern that may be recognized, often between the lines.

Unless one reviews Freud's writings continuously, and from one or another point of view, one finds it difficult to maintain some organized and comprehensive conception of the fundamentals of the very technique by way of which he gathered the data that support or justify his theory of psychoanalysis. And there is always room in these reviews for some further penetration and amplification as well as critical

The Atmosphere of Safety

discussion of Freud. In the final section of this chapter I shall take up briefly a few of the major points that today seem to be problematic.

I have organized my review of Freud's technical papers under five headings: the difficulties in the way of change; the complexity and the ambiguity of change and the attitude of finding out; the importance of a disciplined approach; the importance of an empathic approach; and the importance of the analyst's confidence in the analyst and in himself or herself. I shall not review systematically or exhaustively the many points Freud made about the handling of specific arrangements and problems which must be part of any attempt at analysis and which, each in its own way, may be shown to add to the atmosphere of safety.

In view of the general familiarity with Freud's papers that can be safely assumed, I shall use direct quotations sparingly, and then mainly to highlight some of Freud's less frequently cited, though extremely significant, observations and arguments. Page references to specific points will be appropriate only in certain instances.

The Papers on Technique

THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF CHANGE

The adult analyst comes to analysis with a troubled life story, the beginning of which is gradually seen to extend back to earliest childhood. The formative influences of that early period play a part in virtually every important aspect of his or her life. The process of change during analysis must contend with a vast network of disguised expressions, derivatives, and reactions against them; of assets and achievements which have been developed out of these and subsequently have come to be valued in their own right; and of adjustments to personal limitations which go hand in hand with the strengths of the analyst and which he or she will not confront gladly. At the core of this formidable problematic life is extreme infantile anxiety or a sense of danger that serves unconsciously as a major rationale for the analyst's ever-present and ever-problematic resistance. Consequently, fundamental personality change can take place only slowly and in a manner that cannot be predetermined (p. 130), and an atmosphere of safety can only be developed slowly and uncertainly.

THE ANALYTIC ATTITUDE

No single variable emerges with more force in these papers on technique than resistance. Resistance figures as the chief variable in the discussion of the handling of dreams, the dynamics of transference, and the approach to remembering, repeating, and working through. Resistance, Freud said, accompanies the analysis step by step (p. 103). This is to say that every advance enters into a new domain of opposition to the work of analysis. It is resistance that makes change slow and difficult. It is resistance that makes it possible for the analysand to know something consciously and yet not know it effectively (p. 142), and certainly the analyst's knowing something has little or no bearing on the question of whether the analysand knows it at all (p. 96).

Further, it is resistance that subverts the attachment to the analyst, making it into a source of opposition to the analysis itself by provoking irrational demands and hostility, as well as gross violations of the fundamental rule. It is resistance that has far greater power than the analysand's consciously cooperative attitudes, keen interest in intellectual understanding and collaboration, and even considerable subjective suffering. On this view, Freud maintained a benign scepticism toward the analysand's early improvement, friendly and helpful attitudes, rapid acceptance of interpretations and constructions, and ready production of apparently corroborative material (see, for example, p. 96).

One of Freud's most telling arguments in this connection was his pointing out how this same pervasive and oppressive resistance is encountered in the analyses of analysts. He said: "No one who is familiar with the nature of neurosis will be astonished to hear that even a man who is very able to carry out an analysis on other people can behave like any other mortal and be capable of producing the most intense resistances as soon as he himself becomes the object of analytic investigation. When this happens we are once again reminded of the dimension of depth in the mind, and it does not surprise us to find that neurosis has its roots in psychical strata to which an intellectual knowledge of analysis has not penetrated" (p. 126). In making this observation, Freud was talking about us and to us. He was urging us not to forget how resistant we ourselves were (or are) as analysts, and he was cautioning us not to place naive trust in the power of intellectual preparation and professional motivation.

It might, therefore, be interjected here that, in addition to the role played by the analyst's fantasized omnipotence in his or her intolerance of the analysand's resistances, there is also to be considered the role played by inadequate resolution of the analyst's own resistances. It is an expectable consequence of these inadequately resolved and

The Atmosphere of Safety

continuing resistances that, inappropriately and defensively, the analyst will keep trying to prove something about the completeness of his or her own personal analysis. This may be attempted, for example, by developing an attacking, exhorting, or at least impatient attitude toward the analysand's resistances—none of which can contribute to the necessary atmosphere of safety. If, by definition, the still resistant analyst does not feel adequately safe, how can the analysand? Beyond the implication that one should not persecute the resisting analysand, there is the further implication that one should be satisfied with the limits of analytic achievement in each case. Admittedly, it is no easy matter to arrive analytically at a determination of these limits.

Freud recognized that the study of the resistance must itself play a central part in the analysis. That is to say, he recognized that there is something fundamentally antithetical to the analytic attitude in viewing the resistance as anything other than additional analytic material to be interpreted. It is material from which a great deal can be extracted concerning the history and current status of the analysand's problems. Freud went so far as to say that the greatest analytic gains will be made through the analysis of the resistance (p. 155). This emphasis only gained in force with the advent of the structural point of view and its technical implication of the need for thorough analysis of the ego, especially of preferred defensive strategies and their history. This productive, affirmative orientation toward resistance is essential in establishing an atmosphere of safety. Initially taken as a danger, the consistent, patient, and neutral analysis of resistance gets to be one of the analysand's criteria of the analyst's empathy and understanding, and thus a basis for consciously tolerating progressively less distorted derivatives of infantile conflict.

Anxiety as a motive for resistance came into its own in "Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety" (Freud, 1926), ten to fifteen years after Freud wrote his papers on technique. At the time he wrote these technical papers, he was dealing with the role of anxiety in resistance mostly by implication, for he was then more concerned to emphasize the resistance to giving up the unconscious infantile gratifications obtained through symptoms, character traits, and other forms of repetition or acting out. There, he attributed this resistance to the unconscious infantile wishes (p. 103). He estimated that the strength of these infantile wishes and the depth of their unconscious gratification exert far more influence over the analysis than the conscious suffering that brings one to analysis (p. 143). It is in connection with this source of resistance that the promotion of the positive transference assumed

22

THE ANALYTIC ATTITUDE

such importance in Freud's discussion of technique. He even said that one must "compel" the development of the transference (p. 108).

Freud's principal points in this regard were these. During analysis, the analysand's continuing search for infantile wishful gratification has to be directed more and more toward the analyst. Ideally it culminates in a transference neurosis, that is, a centering of neurotic concerns or symptoms on the relationship to the analyst. This redirection will be accomplished chiefly through systematic interpretation of manifestations of resistance and transference. Only on this basis might one hope that the analysand will continue the often arduous work of analysis, for now he or she will tolerate the anxiety, frustration, and other painful affects entailed by analysis, and will do so on the strength of the hope that finally the analyst's transference-love will be obtained (p. 169). Many years later, in "Analysis Terminable and Interminable" (1937a), Freud emphasized the analysand's hope of finally obtaining the paternal penis or some symbolic equivalent of it, such as a baby. Only wishes with a force of such magnitude can be counted on to overcome the resistance. Hence the importance of proper and timely handling of the transference, particularly with respect to its subversion by the resistance (see, for example, pp. 162-163 and 167-168). The transference neurosis must be at one and the same time heightened *and rendered safe* by the interpretations and constructions developed from within the neutral analytic attitude. Only thus are the very great obstacles to change converted into agents of change.

THE COMPLEXITY AND AMBIGUITY OF CHANGE AND THE ATTITUDE OF FINDING OUT

Freud cautioned against taking anything for granted about the possibility of change, the direction in which change will take place, and the extent to which change will be effected. He spoke of analysis as a process which, once it is started with the help of the initial positive transference and the clearing away of preliminary resistances, will go its own way (p. 130).

It is, I think, appropriate to interpolate here a few remarks on analysis as a process that "goes its own way." According to my impression, too often analysts have used this notion to legitimize far-reaching inactivity on their part. One must remember that Freud did also refer to the "middle game" of analysis when he drew his famous analogy with the game of chess (p. 123). Although he said he could provide no guidelines for this middle game, he was obviously not envisioning

21

The Atmosphere of Safety

inactivity as a regular and rigid practice. Rather, in speaking of a process that goes its own way, he was warning the analyst not to be too directive on the basis of preconceived ideas about technique, psychopathology, and desirable outcomes.

Freud intended to emphasize the complexity and novelty of the explanations that will have to be worked out during the analysis. He recognized that there is no simple truth about symptoms or developmental factors (p. 99). He discouraged the analyst from either defining particular sectors to work in or presenting specific goals to the patient. It is "evenly suspended attention" that is called for (p. 113), inasmuch as it is usually only after the initial communication of analytic material that its significance may be defined and estimated. And this significance may well be surprising. Clearly, any other approach forecloses the issues, which is to say that it fosters new compromise formations or intensifies old defenses. Freud also stressed the danger of the analyst's projecting his or her peculiarities into the analysand and then overgeneralizing to all analysands or all people from this already biased view of the analytic data (p. 117). His warning against one's getting too excited by apparently corroborative material dished up by the analysand may be recalled in this connection.

What these recommendations add up to is this. The appropriate analytic attitude is one of *finding out*: finding out what the analysis itself will be or be concerned with; where the principal work will be done, which, as he said, need not be in the same locale as where the principal conflicts are (p. 104); how this work will best be done; and, by implication, finding out when, why, and how to establish a termination of the analysis.

According to Freud, there are guidelines or constraints that must ordinarily be observed, such as the introduction of the fundamental rule, the recumbent position of the analysand, and the frequency and regularity of analytic sessions. But Freud was also indicating that these factors must be understood as helping to establish a framework within which the analysis will be jointly created by analyst and analysand. The analysis is created by a continuing examination and interpretation of its progress and the obstacles to its further progress. It begins to become evident how much in each case the psychoanalytic process is a study of itself as it is created in and through the analytic dialogue (see chapter 14). What else can it be if it is always a matter of finding out where one is going, how, why, and with which consequences?

Freud did not take for granted the usefulness of the initial anamnestic data or the correctness of one's initial diagnostic impression. In-

THE ANALYTIC ATTITUDE

read, he recommended a trial analysis of one or two weeks during which time the analyst could hope to identify what we might now call pseudoneurotic schizophrenics or borderline personalities, those patients who, in his view, are not adequately analyzable owing to their essential unrelatedness to other people.

Freud recognized that just as it is difficult to maintain an interpretive analytic attitude toward resistance, it is difficult to maintain the nondirective constituent of the analytic attitude. A part of the problem is this, that in a general way the analyst can often recognize a good deal of the primitive, conflictual significance of material being presented by the analysand and can anticipate its further elaboration. However, Freud saw that there was a long way between the analyst's knowing something and the analysand's knowing it. At the same time he saw that the analysand might know something consciously and yet at the same time not know it in the sense of having insightfully established meaningful connections with hitherto unconscious significant conflicts and their infantile origins. He was aware that the analysand could be frightened by too knowing a stance on the analyst's part or by too hasty, deep, or insistent an interpretation. Although Freud did not go into detail, he was making room for the unpredictable specifics of the analytic process, that is, for those turns in the work by way of which certain types of conflict in certain realms of life, certain dreams and symptomatic variations, and the like, prove to be the best routes to insight and working through.

Before finding and traversing these routes, the analyst can only have an intellectualized, incomplete, and relatively nonspecific or nonindividualized kind of insight. Although useful to the analyst while listening, it is not usable insight—or not yet that—and for the analysand its being verbalized can be frightening. Bringing it up explicitly may intensify resistances. The directive question, "How do you get from here to there?" is, therefore, usually less appropriate as a guide for implementing the analytic attitude than the questions, "Just where are we anyway and where will we get to from here?" It is the finding out questions that define the freest type of adherence by both analyst and analysand to the fundamental rule. What I am stressing is not so much a matter of technique as it is a guiding attitude toward the complexity and the ambiguity of psychoanalytic change. Arriving at the most individualized version of insightful change is, in the end, the only really safe and therefore effective analytic objective.

To refer again to the time when we ourselves were analysands, we need only think of just how great and unanticipated were the varieties

The Atmosphere of Safety

of content and the types of change that had to be dealt with before it was possible to know at first hand our defenses, our Oedipus complexes, our analytic, orality, and narcissism. Only when the approach is thus individualized can one arrive at the belief, and feel secure in the belief, that one's own analyst is indeed an analyst and that the analysis is indeed an analysis of oneself. The analyst's offering generalized wisdom or universal insight can establish only the self-limiting, unstable, and resistance-intensifying security of submission to omniscience.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A DISCIPLINED APPROACH

The topic of discipline as a constituent of the analytic attitude provoked some of Freud's most dogmatic and ambiguous statements. He urged, for example, that the analyst adopt the attitude of a surgeon (p. 115); that he be only a mirror to the analysand (pp. 117-118); and that he enforce abstinence (p. 165). Leo Stone (1961) did a good deal to clear up the confusion engendered by these problematic statements. More recently, in an analysis of Freud's analytic attitude, Samuel Lipston (1977) has clarified matters further, though perhaps not uncontroversially. In general, it can be said that the contexts and tones of Freud's remarks made it clear enough that he was urging a disciplined approach in which considerations of what will be most helpful to the analysis, and therefore to the analysand, will always be foremost in the analyst's mind. Thus, when recommending that the analyst remain cold, he was thinking of the surgeon's skill and decisiveness. One might say that he was distinguishing between sentimental or maudlin analysis and analysis ruled by disciplined compassion.

Freud did not want the analyst to inject his own personality forcibly into the analytic process, neither deliberately nor through blatant countertransferences. He did not want the analyst to take the idealizing and erotic transference as a personal tribute. He did not want the analyst to be guided rigidly by ordinary considerations of delicacy and restraint in taking up what needs to be taken up and doing so in an effective way. Freud stressed truthfulness as fundamental to the analytic attitude (p. 164), and he emphasized "honorable" procedure when he spoke of preparing the analysand early for the rigors of analytic work (p. 129). One might add to this that it is only on the basis of progress within an analysis that the analysand dares to believe deeply, even if only intermittently, in this truthfulness, when it is there, and to comprehend fully, even if unstably, the inescapability of the rigors of the work. In the case of the analytic process, truly informed consent

THE ANALYTIC ATTITUDE

an be established only step by step and on the basis of an increasing sense of safety.

Additionally, Freud did not want the analyst to yield thoughtlessly or too readily to the not infrequent demands for gratifications in the analytic relationship, for he understood that the analyst's doing so can only obscure resistances, make the analysis of transference all the more difficult, and diminish the motivation for further work. He did not want the analyst to give the analysand permission to suspend observance of the fundamental rule, that one report all of one's thoughts without regard to conventional standards of coherence, importance, or decorum; instead, the analyst should attempt to analyze the departures from frankness that invariably occur. He did not want the analyst to count on the usefulness of sharing confidences with the analysand as a way of promoting the analysis. Nor did he want the analyst to confuse personal and professional relationship on the one hand and analytic relationship on the other, for the distinction to be made is necessary to protect the analyst's own emotional life and the neutrality and objectivity of the work of analysis. Admittedly, the distinction between the two types of relationship is sometimes difficult to draw, but it is fully warranted at least to be concerned to draw it. Freud's consistent objective was to do as little as possible to further complicate the inevitably complex analysis of resistance and transference.

A word is in order here concerning the analyst's being a "mirror" and remaining "opaque" to the analysand. Freud's recommendation does not legitimize stiff formality, impassivity, and remoteness. The "mirror" refers to the analyst's reflecting back to the analysand, now in neutral analytic form, what the analysand has been showing unconsciously in his or her associations and behavior. It is an active, transformatonal mirror and so is not a mirror at all. The metaphor is not well chosen. It is better to call this mirroring a psychoanalytic reading of the analysand's text (see especially chapters 11, 12, and 16). In the same vein, "opaque" refers to the analyst's not using personal disclosure as a major tool of analysis. "Opaque" would be better called the subordination of the analyst's biography and personality to the task at hand. The term "subordination" is superior to "opaqueness" in two respects. First, it implies the recognition that total personal opacity is impossible to achieve and, owing to its artificiality, technically undesirable as a goal. Second, it indicates the continuing need for flexibility and imagination on the analyst's part in achieving, with suitable variation from one analysand to the next, an analytic version of himself or herself, a second self that integrates the analyst's own biog-

The Atmosphere of Safety

raphy and personality with the constraints of the analytic method and the needs of each analysand (see chapter 3).

There must be many reasons for the absoluteness with which Freud stated some of his recommendations on discipline. The dissensions in the analytic movement during the early teens of this century must be mentioned here. I would suggest that in part this absoluteness also be taken as a sign that Freud recognized how powerful are the analyst's defensive and transference needs as well as his or her narcissistic needs. The young analyst, he observed, is particularly vulnerable to heterosexual erotic transference. This point must be extended to include vulnerability to homosexual erotic transference, though in this respect the vulnerability is more likely to be shown by blind spots and defensive displacement of analytic interest than by manifest sexual arousal. One way or another, the analyst's temptation is to use the analytic work to get otherwise unavailable gratifications, support faltering defenses, enhance grandiose fantasies, and, in the end, to use the analysand rather than to work for him or her. How much the analyst's sense of danger within the analysis depends on the frequency and extent of the analyst's nonneutral violations of trust in this respect!

One need not be an apologist for Freud to read his strictures on discipline as statements of his recognition of, and respect for, the frailties of the analyst at work and the ambiguity of the work itself. It is even possible to infer that Freud had learned a great deal from errors of his own in these respects.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AN EMPATHIC APPROACH

In connection with empathy, though not expressly under that heading, Freud made a number of important recommendations. One should not rush to interpret everything one sees at any moment. One should avoid humiliating the analysand through responding nonanalytically to manifestations of transference, that is, by preaching, accusing, rejecting, etc. One should make interpretations that are but a step ahead of where the analysand is and, ideally, should make them in such a way as to let him or her get the solution (p. 140). The associative response to one's intervention should always be scrutinized in order to test out the intervention's correctness and to decide whether further interpretation is required. It is important not to overestimate the analysand's capacity for sublimation. Nor should one expect an unrestricted capacity for object relations on the part of analysands

THE ANALYTIC ATTITUDE

with significant narcissistic problems. One should demonstrate an attitude of sympathetic understanding and concern from early on in the relationship (pp. 139-140). It is essential to maintain an attitude of flexibility with regard to the analytic route that will be taken by the analysand and the level on which he or she will be functioning from moment to moment (pp. 123-124). One must always take into account the inevitability of ambivalence in human relationships. And one ought to be satisfied with whatever the fruits of the day's work may be.

In contrast to Freud's strict statements in connection with the disciplined approach, this set of statements suggests that the analytic attitude must include gentleness, undemandingness, open-mindedness, flexibility, patience, tentativeness, spontaneity and individuality (p. 111), and willingness to go along. What matters is not so much bountiful expressions of empathy as such, for these can be condescending, gratuitous, maudlin, overstimulating, or seductive. Rather, as in the case of resistance, what matters is an unflagging recognition that one must function essentially as an empathic, facilitating supervisor of the analysand's further development through analysis (see, for example, p. 130). I would not say the analysand's "guide," as that term implies both detailed knowledge of the terrain and preestablished goals. A better metaphor is the analyst as a seasoned and hardy coexplorer. In any case, a facilitating supervisor is neither a tyrant nor a martinet, neither a mindreader nor a controlling architect of the personality. Freud's steady preoccupation with resistance may be viewed in the light of the analyst's playing this helpful role. Elsewhere, as I mentioned, he emphasized the dread of change that underlies the resistance, indicating that the analyst's awareness of this dread can only add to empathic facilitation. As a facilitating supervisor, the analyst is safe; as an enforcer or mastermind, however manifestly benevolent in intent, he or she can only be experienced as dangerous by the analysand (for example, as a castrating, abandoning, or engulfing figure, one who is the external embodiment of fantasized persecutors or omnipotent infantile imagos).

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ANALYST'S CONFIDENCE

Freud emphasized that everything that comes up in the analysis has an actual or potential analytic yield. The analysand must learn that this is so (p. 93), and the analyst must keep on relearning it. Everything can be put to use, including the resistance.

The Atmosphere of Safety

Freud took an impressively affirmative view of the trends which are being expressed in the neurotic symptoms. In connection with the importance of directing the analysand's attention to the phenomena of his illness, such as the precise wording of obsessional ideas, Freud said this: "His illness itself must no longer seem to him contemptible, but must become an enemy worthy of his mettle, a piece of his personality, which has solid ground for its existence and out of which things of value for his future life have to be derived" (p. 152).

Further, Freud encouraged the recognition of the continuity between the old and the new in transference, both within the analysis and within relationships in everyday life. He saw the necessity of tolerating the apparent aimlessness of the analytic work (p. 94). He appreciated how many, varied, and subtle are the forms of remembering through dreams, screen memories, repetitive acting out, character attitudes, and the like, which is to say that he was confident that the important life-historical material which is consciously unavailable permeates what often appear to be irrelevant or inadequate data. He urged confidence in the mutual understanding between analyst and analysand of unconscious mental processes (p. 115). He trusted in the persistence of dynamic contexts beyond the immediate time when they first come up, expecting that material of importance not arrived at during one day's session may very well be arrived at subsequently (p. 94).

Freud's brave view of the effects of constructions or reconstructions of the infantile past is striking (pp. 148-150; see also his later paper, "Constructions in Analysis" [1937b]). He asserted that it makes no difference whether the analysand ever gets to remember the early events or experiences that are constructed by the analyst. Here Freud showed remarkable confidence in determining the correctness and value of constructions. It is not conscious testimony that counts in what is recalled or reorganized and what is changed in feeling and behavior; it is consequences, that is, the consequences of constructions. Once a construction has been worked through adequately, the analysand knows and uses unconsciously something that, consciously, he or she can only assent to intellectually. Here is a significant reversal of Freud's usual emphasis on how much depends on making the unconscious conscious!

I want particularly to mention Freud's boldly saying that real life provides no model for the analyst's mode of response (p. 166). Here he seemed to mean more than the analyst's not responding in kind to the analysand, that is, not meeting hate with hate or love with love and