1 Case Histories and Treatment Reports

Introduction

The crisis of psychoanalytic theory, which was the central topic of Chap. 1 of the companion volume on the principles of psychoanalytic practice, has inevitably had some effects on psychoanalytic technique. In the last decade it has also become apparent that the perspectives of psychoanalytic therapy rooted in interpersonal theories have caused many concepts relevant to psychoanalytic practice to be reevaluated. It is now essential to distinguish between, on the one hand, the theory of the genesis or the explanation of psychic and psychosomatic illnesses and, on the other, the theory of therapeutic change and how it is brought about. Of course, all assumptions about structural changes depend on the observation of variations and alterations of symptoms.

This chapter’s title, “Case Histories and Treatment Reports,” reflects the discord in Freud’s work between the theory of genesis and that of change. Our reconsideration leads us in the first section of this chapter to reject the notion that he gave adequate scientific consideration to both poles of this discord in his case histories. It is necessary to reformulate his famous assertion about the existence of an inseparable bond between curing and research. A promising new source for regrounding psychoanalytic therapy is for us to take the fact seriously that the theory of repeated traumatization has significance for the structuring of the therapeutic situation.

If we attempt to apply scientific criteria to the preparation of case histories and treatment reports, it is necessary for us to experiment with different schemes for reporting our work. For about three decades we, together with many other analysts, have striven toward the goal of reproducing the psychoanalytic dialogue as precisely as possible. In Sects. 1.2 and 1.3 we refer to important stages in the development of reporting, which we elaborate on in later chapters by providing appropriate examples. We have now reached a new stage. The use of audio recordings enables us to make the verbal exchanges between patient and analyst accessible to third parties in a reliable form. Because of the significance of this technical aid for advanced training and research, in Sect. 1.4 we make the reader familiar with a controversy that has been dragging on for a long time and that the examples we give in Sect. 7.8 should help resolve.
1.1 Back to Freud and the Path to the Future

Freud's case histories frequently fulfill the function of an introduction to his work. Jones emphasizes that the Dora case - the first of Freud's exemplary case histories following his *Studies on Hysteria* - for years served as a model for students of psycho-analysis, and although our knowledge has greatly progressed since then, it makes today as interesting reading as ever. It was the first of Freud's post-neurological writings I had come across, at the time of its publication, and I well remember the deep impression the intuition and the close attention to detail displayed in it made on me. Here was a man who not only listened closely to every word his patient spoke, but regarded each such utterance as every whit as definite and as in need of correlation as the phenomena of the physical world. (Jones 1954, p. 288)

This makes it all the more remarkable that it was precisely on this case that Erikson (1962) demonstrated substantial weaknesses in Freud's understanding of etiology and therapy (see Vol.1, Sect. 8.6). The paper he presented to the American Psychoanalytic Association marked the increasing criticism both of Freud's explanations of etiology in his case histories and of his technique as described in his *treatment reports*. In view of the growing flood of publications containing such criticism, Arlow (1982, p. 14) has expressed his concern about their ties to objects belonging to the past. He recommended that we should simply say goodbye to these "childhood friends" who served us so well, put them to rest, and get back to work.

That and how Anna O., little Hans, Dora, President Schreber, the Rat Man, and the Wolf Man became our childhood friends is definitely very important, as is knowing the conditions under which each friendship developed. Training institutes mediate these friendships, in this way familiarizing the candidates with Freud's work as a therapist, scientist, and author.

While writing this textbook we have returned to our own childhood friends and have studied several of Freud's large case histories in detail. Even though new elements can be discovered by rereading them, we have hermeneutic reservations about supporting Lacan's (1975, p. 39) call for a "return to Freud." With Laplanche (1989, p. 16), we "prefer to speak of *going back over* Freud, as it is impossible to return to Freud without working on him, without making him the object of work." In our reconsideration we do not meet these old friends in the same form as during our initial encounter with and enthusiasm for Katharina or little Hans. We have always viewed Freud's case histories in a somewhat different light and, unfortunately, have frequently shown too little concern for how Freud himself understood his texts. We were not, after all, introduced to the love for psychoanalysis through Freud alone, but also by spiritual parents who solicited support for their own views. In whom could we then place our trust and confidence in going back to Freud in order to ensure that ideas can be revitalized and point to the future that Arlow and Brenner (1988) and Michels (1988) envisage in their suggestions for reforming psychoanalytic training.

In view of the immensity of our task in determining which items belong to the past, it is impossible to rely on a single individual, not even someone of the stature of Rapaport, who ventured (in 1960) to estimate the probable longevity of important psychoanalytic concepts. Which mediator should we turn to in attempting to