

# MODERN PSYCHOANALYSIS

## A Brief Outline

Men must be taught as if  
you taught them not,  
And things unknown proposed as  
things forgot.

Alexander Pope  
Essay on Criticism

Modern Psychoanalysis has evolved by building on the psychoanalytic base that Freud so brilliantly established. The major concepts of classical analysis are incorporated in modern psychoanalysis and utilized where appropriate. Indeed, Freud's contributions regarding the unconscious mind, dreams, psychosexual stages of development, the significance of early childhood, as well as the concepts of free association and interpretation, are crucial to our understanding of the individual. Freud's central emphasis on transference and resistance has molded psychoanalytic thinking until the present day.

As psychoanalytic research has proceeded, many dark corners of the mind have been illuminated and more sophisticated techniques have followed recent theoretical understandings. The field of modern psychoanalysis has extended classical psychoanalysis in two basic ways: (1) it has made help available to kinds of people and types of problems not considered suitable for classical analysis, and, (2) it has extended and adapted the medium of psychoanalysis to situations and settings (i.e., group, classroom, industry, etc.) that have traditionally been excluded.

Modern psychoanalysis, which was developed from the early 1950s to the present, most notably by Dr. Hyman Spotnitz and his students, was originally designed to overcome some of the limitations inherent in the classical psychoanalytic model in dealing with

seriously disturbed individuals. Problems which had their origins in the first two years of life (the pre-Oedipal stages) did not respond adequately to the classical Freudian method of interpretation, nor did classical theory fully understand these people. Accordingly, new treatment models and techniques with broader applicability were devised (Spotnitz, 1956; Coleman, 1956; Coleman and Nelson, 1957; Love, 1959).

Interpretation, the major tool of classical psychoanalysis, has little impact on a patient whose problem originated at a preverbal time in life, when explanations were not relevant—indeed, not even understood. An explanation is often experienced as an attack regardless of its truthfulness or relevance. In practice, relatively few people are able to improve as a result of causative explanation. Yet classical analysts have persisted in using interpretation as their major technique and have labeled those patients not able to respond to it as unanalyzable. Such patients are clearly analyzable with modern analytic techniques.

The classical analytic emphasis on libido or sexuality, while perfectly valid for certain problems, seems irrelevant when a person is emotionally conflicted in a different area. Accordingly, modern psychoanalysts place a greater emphasis on the role of aggression and its appropriate expression which is seen as a major problem in many personalities. Indeed, if we look at the contemporary world, it is not difficult to note that aggressive and not libidinal problems are at the root of most serious ills. War, crime, prejudice, etc. are prevalent indicators of what happens when societies and individuals succumb to uncontrolled aggression. Likewise, when undue amounts of aggression are repressed other types of problems result—schizophrenia, psychosis, psychosomatic illness, and depression are all largely a result of dammed up hostility within the psyche. Spotnitz's (1956, 1958, 1969) landmark analytic work in schizophrenia revealed the central importance of repressed aggression in the etiology of that illness. As modern analytic research has progressed the central role of hidden aggression in most emotional disorders has emerged more clearly.

Libidinal problems however, do exist and Freud's insightful illumination of them is drawn upon when necessary. Problems originating in the Oedipal stage (age 4-6) such as conversion hysteria certainly do respond to the interpretation of libidinal dynamics as do

more seriously disturbed patients toward the end of their treatment. It is hoped with every patient, that once the incapacitating repressed aggression is dealt with, his resistances to love and sexuality can be resolved by more classical analytic methods. However, for the majority of children and adults it would seem that difficulties with aggression incapacitate their living and learning. Of course, an individual cannot be truly loving until he has the capacity to be truly hating in a controlled way. Thus, it is the goal of modern psychoanalysis to help produce what Spitz (1961) calls the "well-orchestrated personality," an individual able to feel all of his feelings and still function properly. And in order to do this the resistances to feeling and expressing controlled aggression must be given priority.

In modern psychoanalysis, the classical concept of object transference is accepted but emphasis is placed on the *narcissistic transference*, i.e., those feeling states in which the patient interchanges his own feelings with those of the analyst.

The analyst is here seen as an extension of the patient and not as a significant person from the past. This kind of transference is necessary for progress when an individual's ego development did not proceed satisfactorily during the early years and he is initially unable to form an object transference. Modern psychoanalysis, in understanding the meaning and need for a narcissistic transference, makes help available to people who function at a more primitive emotional level.

In addition, the study of narcissistic transference phenomena has demonstrated many useful applications to the more normal and less disturbed individual. Indeed, this book will illustrate the therapeutic use of the narcissistic transference in the classroom setting. Since most individuals have some component in their personalities of unresolved problems originating during the first two years of life, these problems can be most effectively dealt with in the context of a narcissistic transference. The various modern psychoanalytic techniques used to establish the narcissistic transference help solidify rapport with the patient by relieving his sense of aloneness and isolation.

The classical analytic concept of resolving resistances as a prime goal of treatment is maintained in modern psychoanalysis.

A resistance is defined as a defense charged with