



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Psychoanalytic enactments: how psychoanalysts understand, identify and work through enactments

Enactment psicanalítico: como psicanalistas entendem, identificam e elaboram

Enactment psicoanalítico: cómo los psicoanalistas entienden, identifican y elaboran

Charlie Trelles Severo^a

Maria Lucia Tiellet Nunes^b

Cláudio Laks Eizirik^c

^a Postgraduate Program in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences – UFRGS, Psychiatry – Porto Alegre – Rio Grande do Sul – Brasil.

^b Free University of Berlin, Germany., Psychology – Berlin – Berlin – Alemanha.

^c Postgraduate Program in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences – UFRGS, Psychiatry – Porto Alegre – Rio Grande do Sul – Brasil.

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Abstract

Studies on psychoanalysis are essential and have shown the efficacy of these practices. The psychological functioning of the dyad is always present during this process, expressed through transference, countertransference, projective identification, analytic field, and, more recently, enactments. Objective: To describe how psychoanalysts understand, identify and work through the phenomenon of enactment. Participants: Eight psychoanalysts: two are in training, four are associate members and two training analysts.

The anonymity of the participants was assured in the Declaration of Free and Informed Consent. Method: Consisted of a qualitative and descriptive study, the data being interpreted through content analysis (Bardin, 1977). Eight face-to-face semi-structured interviews were held. Results: three final categories of responses: Theoretical Bases, Technical Bases and Level of Experience. Enactment is understood and expressed through the “playing out” of mental conflicts. It possible to detect the patterns of the object relations, brought into the concrete reality of the transferential and countertransferential relationships through projective identification. If enactments are not interpreted, they block the evolution of the therapeutic process, with collusions or impasses between the analytic pair. The interviewees consider it technically useful, as it favours interpretation in the hereand-now of the analytic situation. The length of time of professional work and personal investment for broadening knowledge both promote in the analysts an attitude in which the technique they learned can be used with more security. Enactment is characterised as one of the most current mechanisms that reflect today's emphasis in psychoanalysis on the relationship between the members of the therapeutic dyad.

Keywords: Psychoanalytic enactment; Transferential and countertransferential psychoanalytic relationships; Intersubjective relationship; Analytic dyad; Psychodynamic psychotherapy.

Resumo

Estudos sobre psicanálise são essenciais e demonstram a eficácia dessas práticas. O funcionamento psicológico da díade analítica/psicoterapêutica está sempre presente durante esse processo, expresso por transferência, contratransferência, identificação projetiva, campo analítico e, mais recentemente, enactments. Objetivo: Descrever como os psicanalistas compreendem, identificam e elaboram o fenômeno enactment. Participantes: Oito psicanalistas: dois estão em treinamento, quatro são membros associados e dois analistas didatas. O anonimato dos participantes foi assegurado com o Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido. Método: É um estudo qualitativo/descritivo, sendo os dados interpretados através de Análise de Conteúdo (Bardin, 1977). Foram realizadas oito entrevistas semiestruturadas face a face. Resultados: São identificadas três categorias finais de respostas: Bases Teóricas, Bases Técnicas e Nível de Experiência. O enactment é entendido e expresso através da “encenação” dos conflitos mentais. É possível detectar os padrões das relações objetais, trazidos para a realidade concreta das relações transferenciais e contratransferenciais através da identificação projetiva. Se os enactments não são interpretados, bloqueiam a evolução do processo terapêutico, com colusões ou impasses entre o par analítico. Os entrevistados consideram este fenômeno tecnicamente útil, pois favorece a interpretação no aqui-e-agora da situação analítica. O tempo de trabalho profissional e o investimento pessoal para ampliar o conhecimento promovem nos analistas uma atitude em que a técnica que aprendem pode ser usada com mais segurança. O enactment é caracterizado como um dos mecanismos mais atuais que refletem a ênfase contemporânea da psicanálise na relação entre os membros da dupla analítica/terapêutica.

Palavras-chave: Enactment psicanalítico; Relações transferenciais e contratransferenciais; Relação intersubjetiva; Dupla analítica; Psicoterapia psicodinâmica.

Resumen

Los estudios sobre el psicoanálisis son esenciales y demuestran la eficacia de estas prácticas. El funcionamiento psicológico de la díada analítica / psicoterapéutica está siempre presente durante ese proceso, expresado por transferencia, contratransferencia, identificación proyectiva, campo analítico y, más recientemente, enactments. Objetivo: Describir cómo los psicoanalistas comprenden, identifican y elaboran el fenómeno enactment. Participantes: Ocho psicoanalistas: dos están en entrenamiento, cuatro son miembros asociados y dos analistas didácticos. El anonimato de los participantes fue asegurado con el Término de Consentimiento Libre y Esclarecido. Método: Es un estudio cualitativo / descriptivo, siendo los datos interpretados a través de Análisis de Contenido (Bardin, 1977). Se realizaron ocho entrevistas semiestructuradas cara a cara. Resultados: Se identifican tres categorías finales de respuestas: Bases Teóricas, Bases Técnicas y Nivel de Experiencia. El enactment se entiende y expresa a través de la “escenificación” de los conflictos mentales. Es posible detectar los patrones de las relaciones objetales traídos a la realidad concreta de las relaciones transferenciales y contratransferenciales a través de la identificación proyectiva. Si los enactments no se interpretan, bloquean la evolución del proceso terapéutico, con colusiones o impasses entre el par analítico. Los entrevistados consideran este fenómeno técnicamente útil, pues favorece la interpretación en el aquí y ahora de la situación analítica. El tiempo de trabajo profesional y la inversión personal para ampliar el conocimiento promueven en los analistas una actitud en la que la técnica que aprenden puede ser usada con más seguridad. El enactment se caracteriza como uno de los mecanismos más actuales que reflejan el énfasis contemporáneo del psicoanálisis en la relación entre los miembros del doble analítico / terapéutico.

Palabras clave: Enactment psicoanalítico; Relaciones transferenciales y contratransferenciales; Relación intersubjetiva; Pareja analítica; Psicoterapia psicodinámica.

Introduction

Freud¹ described as “a very remarkable thing that the [unconscious] of one human being can react on that of the other without passing through the [consciousness]”. He was thus suggesting the existence of unconscious intersubjectivity in human relationships.

The concepts of transference, countertransference²⁻⁵, analytic field⁶ and analytic third⁷ are all based on the mechanism of projective identification⁸. Knowledge of these phenomena continue to engender studies on reactions present in human relationships, including psychotherapeutic and analytic relationships. In these types of relationships, the possibility of repetition and intersection of transferential and countertransferential aspects and the occurrence of projective identification, fosters transformative emotional experiences through the permeability of the analyst and the analytic field. These characteristics have led to innumerable psychoanalytic studies dealing with inter-relational and intersubjective theories^{6,7,9-15}.

With this evolution the concept of *enactment* can be seen as having a place in the contemporary

theoretical and technical psychoanalytic context. Detectable even in very subtle countertransferential reactions, enactment indicates aspects of mental functioning expressed in gestures, expressions, attitudes and can reveal unconscious blocks and difficulties in a patient's capacity for verbal and symbolic expression¹⁶. Characterised by acts, *enactment* is etymologically described by McLaughlin^{17,p.597} in the following words:

[T]he verb "act" is set between two modifiers. [...] By itself, "act" carries a whole range of familiar meanings: from "do", to "act one's will by force", "to exert power", all the way to "perform as an actor – play the part of – to simulate or dissimulate." [...] Adding the prefix "en" emphasises "act" as a noun, and conveys "putting into or upon – to wrap in – make like – adding a more intensive force". The suffix "ment" further intensifies the import and density of "act" as a noun.

This conceptualisation reflects the theory of object relations first introduced by M.Klein, as well as the theory of W.Bion. This latter author emphasises the process of the formation of human thought, whereby the primitive mind is transformed into a mind able to develop, that is, to engage in reflections and relate with other people. Enactment also includes the characteristics of being unconscious and resulting from mutual imposition and having the potential to communicate with others.

Since this concept covers a number of transferential and countertransferential aspects, including acting-out, acting-in, repetitions, actualisation and communication that take place in the analytic field, one can see that, enactment can be considered a hybrid concept¹⁸.

Starting with the basic characteristics that make up enactments, Cassorla^{19,20} brings in the idea of a therapeutic relationship that functions as a spatial and temporal situation where feelings and thoughts between the members of the analytic dyad can be seen, as they are "dramatised", or "brought on the scene", as in a theatre: "the dyad's staging of a scene". With this addition to the concept as presented above, Cassorla^{19,20} recalls that Freud, although he never used the expression enactment, did infer that drama is present in the analytic situation^{21,22}.

This brief historical and theoretical rundown introduces the present study, which has the objective to identify how psychoanalysts understand, conceptualise, identify and work through the phenomenon of enactment.

Methodology

This is a descriptive/qualitative study where "qualitative research studies the knowledge and practices of the participants"^(23, p.21).

Participants

The sample is non-probabilistic, intentional and of convenience. The total number of participants was attained through the saturation method²⁴.

The final material consisted of the results of eight interviews with psychoanalysts affiliated with the IPA/ International Psychoanalytical Association in the state of Rio Grande do Sul/Brazil: two analysts in training, four associate member psychoanalysts and two training analysts.

Exclusion criteria

None of the persons interviewed were personal acquaintances of the interviewer (first author).

Interview Guide/Questionnaire (Figure 1)

A mixed type of questionnaire²⁵ consisting of both closed-and open-end questions drawn up by the researchers. The responses were recorded and transcribed by the interviewer.

1	Which current concept (s) do you consider important for the practice of psychoanalysis (or psychotherapy with analytical orientation)?
2	What do you mean by enactment? Conceptualize, in your own words, what is enactment.
3	In your professional practice, do you identify enactment? How do you identify it?
4	How do you work through enactments?
5	Describe the difficulties you perceive in addressing this topic.
6	Describe the facilities you perceive in addressing this topic.
7	Describe situations that illustrate the enactment theme you have already experienced.
8	Do you consider a useful concept for the daily practice of your profession?
9	Which authors are most useful to you on this topic?
10	Are there differences between Acting Out and Enactment? Which are?

Figure 1

Data Analysis

The data was analysed through the Content Analysis Method²⁶ where any form of communication, be it spoken or written, can be analysed in terms of contents. The analysis involves five stages: A) *Preparation of the information*: the material is read numerous times and each interview is numerically codified; B) *Reduction, or Transformation, of raw content into meaning units (MUs)*, another way of saying that meaningful expressions related to the topic being researched are identified and codified individually for each interview; C) *Categorisation*: the meaning units are grouped by similarity or analogy to make up the thematic categories, which

should obey the criteria of homogeneousness and, together, take on meaning; D) *Description of findings*: the results are communicated through a synthesised text that expresses the meanings that are present, including direct quotes and original data from the interviews; E) *Interpretation, or Discussion, of the findings*: efforts are made to understand the content described by constructing a theory on the basis of the information and categories encountered.

Ethical Aspects

It received approval from the Ethics Committee in Research on Human Beings at Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul/Brazil, under number 443.358. All participants and their anonymity were assured in a Declaration of Prior Free Informed Consent²⁷.

Results

The results are presented by 14 Intermediate Categories and three Final Categories from a total of 781 verbal meaning units(MUs).

Final Category I: THEORETICAL BASES FOR PSYCHOANALYTIC ENACTMENT

It includes elements that sustain general psychoanalytic theory and the theory that underlies psychoanalytic enactment. It is subdivided into five Intermediate Categories.

Psychoanalytic Concepts: Describes the concepts that are considered important for understanding the psychodynamics of today's individuals. All the interviewees referred to the notion of the unconscious as the main psychoanalytic concept and all the remaining characteristics of the theory developed. Most of the participants also referred to enactment as a contemporary psychoanalytic concept. They all consider a number of other concepts important as well, such as transference, countertransference, projective identification, analytic field and intersubjectivity. Other concepts were included in the responses of some of the interviewees: anxiety, narcissism, trauma, object relations and the Oedipus complex.

Quotes:

"The great concept, the concept that establishes, in fact, an epistemological field, is the concept of the unconscious".

Psychoanalytic Authors were cited as classics, unanimously: Freud, Klein, Bion and Winnicott. Considering the theory of the field, the Baranger couple. Not unanimously, were mentioned: Fairbairn, Rosenfeld, Marty, B. Joseph, Meltzer, J. Sandler, Green, Ogden, Iron and Botella couple.

Quotes:

“Bion and Rosenfeldt, the Kleinians, especially, established the possibility of our looking at object relations”.

Other Authors: non-psychoanalytic authors have also been studied in order to broaden knowledge of human development: Z.Bauman and JF.Lyotard. Both have developed important works related to social human conditions in regard to modernity and postmodernity.

Characterisation: definition of enactment and its forms of manifestation. It is subdivided into the following initial categories:

Concept: refers to the definition of psychoanalytic enactment, that is, how they understand enactment.

Quotes:

“[It is] the representation in a scene. It places early mental pain into a scene by means of the interaction between minds, the two minds of the dyad. Unconsciously both play interrelated roles... and this makes the trauma appears in the relationship during the process”.

“This always presupposes a joint and unconscious action of the two, one defining in the other something of that joint action. In these object relations, one influences the other. It is mutual influence”.

“The communication of something unconscious that cannot be communicated verbally to the unconscious of the other... sets up an area of resistance that can at times, we might say, not exactly block, but hamper, the progress of the process”.

Authors on Enactment: Authors who developed the topic of psychoanalytic enactment, from T.Jacobs¹⁶, to the present date.

Quotes:

“[Cassorla]is already dealing with post-enactment. I don’t know if anybody in other countries is doing so much work on this topic”.

All the interviewees mentioned the work of the Brazilian psychoanalyst Roosevelt Cassorla. His work shows historical understanding as well as the bases and classifications of how this phenomenon takes place. His studies have coined the expression “placement in the scene of the dyad” as a synonym for, and definition of, enactment. Jacobs¹⁶ and McLaughlin¹⁷ were also mentioned by two interviewees as pioneer authors on enactment. Other authors referred: the Brazilians M.Gus, N.Nazaré and E.Barros; the Uruguayan, S.Yardino; the Spanish G.Sapisochin.

Types: They were classified as chronic or acute, specified in terms of intensity, durability and dependence on the perception of what goes on in the analytic field^{19,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34,35,36,58}.

Quotes:

Acute Enactments: “[These] are more occasional, and might happen in one, two or three sessions and you realise it very quickly”.

“They are precipitations then and there, something that happens at the moment, that sets the way for chronic enactments”.

Chronic Enactments “What leads to the instalment of chronic enactments is the presence of the death drive. It happens unconsciously and is negative. There is a repetition, a certain monotony, that puts the dyad to ‘sleep’ and inevitably leads analysis or therapy to iatrogenic situations, false results, worsening of the clinical situation or leads to interpretations, collusions or impasses”.

Before Cassorla the expressions *extended enactments* (equivalent to *chronic enactments*) and *short, brief or acute enactments*, equivalent to what we now call *acute enactments*, were used³⁷. Today there are suggestions, first, to refer to the chronic type as *death enactments*, due to the predominance of the death drive in the analytic field and, secondly, to regard *acute enactments* as moments of life, due to their quick solution that favour therapeutic evolution³⁸.

Theoretical Comparisons: differences and similarities were referred to between enactment and negative therapeutic reactions, relationship with projective identification, and relationship with resistance.

Quotes:

“The concept of enactment is very close to that of acting-out which is also similar to Freud’s term in German, *Agieren* (meaning putting into action). Both have the objective of communicating something to the analyst about what is happening.

“Acting-out is [performed] only by the subject, his mind and a situation that he created. You are not a co-participant. There is usually a discharging of elements very close to the drive, in a state that is wrong, poorly transformed and not symbolised”.

“Enactment and acting-out have a similar basis: they are manifest by action”.

The statements indicate correspondence to theoretical bases that define enactment as an unconscious phenomenon: it can therefore be understood psychoanalytically. One can identify an intersubjective characteristic in the mutual and persuasive exchange of projective identifications: enactments have “evocative power”^{39,40}, thus making it possible to re-live, repeat and enact object relations in the analytic field^{16-18,21,22,27,32,34,36,37,41-45,58,46-56}. This potential allows the therapeutic dyad to use these contents as “dreams-for-two”^{27,28,31,33-36,58}, thus constituting a “text” that results from the intersection between transference and countertransference, which must be analysed during the analytic process. According to Renik^{57(p.10)} *enactments* are “the necessary text for analysing transference”.

Analyst and patient, joined in this “field/stage” (the therapeutic space) and with a “text/script” (mental content) to be analysed (analytic process), aim to comprehend this “script” through the intersubjective relationship they have established – intertext/ transference-countertransference relationship²¹. The script becomes evident through the expressions and fantasies that occupy the analytic field. Both patient and analyst attain symbolisations that constitute a healthy mind. If, according to Bion’s theory, they are unable to “dream”, that is, to think, therapeutic evolution is obstructed and “non-dreams-for-two” are established: the dyad is under the effect of an enactment^{18-20,28,29,31-36,46,52,53,58}.

Although it may seem paradoxical, enactments have characteristics that indicate defence and resistance, but they also reveal potential communication. Thus defined, enactments indicate the possibility for corrective emotional experience⁷⁰ or transformational experience⁷⁰, where very early conflicts can be experienced more clearly in the present^{33,37,45,47,50,56,59,60,61}.

Final Category II: TECHNICAL BASES FOR PSYCHOANALYTIC ENACTMENT

Technical approaches and procedures are described and it is divided into five Intermediate Categories.

Psychoanalytic Technique: It refers techniques, procedures and interventions used to approach and understand the unconscious in the analytic process.

Quotes:

“Neutrality is relative. You are always re-evaluating and are open to the patient’s needs, what they need. I usually try to emphasise what I feel without confessing it”.

“Interpretation is the instrument par excellence. The therapist’s interventions are important on the whole”.

“For analysis the important thing is the way the analytic field progresses. Analysis is conceptualised today by access to the drives: the closer we are to working with drives, the more the analysis modifies the character”.

Identification of Enactment: This contains the descriptions of what is necessary to identify enactment

Quotes:

“It begins with the pre-symbolic material but in the analyst’s mind, triggered by a stimulus in the primitive mind of the analysand. We bring up a memory of our own or, you might say, a figurability, using the Botellas’ concept. The analyst might feel uncomfortable in the schizo-paranoid position. The pre-symbolic aspect is brought up that, in the analysand, could not yet be reached”.

“When I begin to have repetitive feelings about the patient, my fantasy shows these pre-verbal feelings. I think it’s like an alarm or a feeling that indicates that there is something there that I’m not catching and that I can’t talk about”.

"I'm always listening to the patient and hearing what I listen to from the patient. Everything that the impact from the patient sparks up in me, in relation to him. It's this being tuned in to myself that, sometimes, I end up perceiving things by their action in me that they are not verbally telling me, but are telling me in another way since it stirs up certain reactions in me".

Working Through Enactments: It includes how to work through the resolution of enactment. The need to consider the perceptive immaturity of the patients is significantly described and, for this reason, one should carefully work through enactments.

Quotes:

"As Bion said, it is more the work of maternal reverie than specifically of interpretation. If [the patient] doesn't absorb [this], how can they know what is happening? Names should be given to the feelings, the way Bion does, or [you can] function like a good enough mother, as Winnicott described it. Show some things that the patient doesn't see until they begin to understand that that has meanings he didn't think he would find, that which was cut off, we might say, unrepresentable, must be gone back to, reorganised, narrated, put into words. There are certain patients who need a "flow of words", as if this were reverie in terms of words and what they mean. When people are more regressive and need more support, they need, almost, a "lap". Sometimes they go a long time needing to link together with someone".

"You simply have to be very careful to avoid returning what was projected into the patient. When you are very involved, very taken up by the countertransference, the best thing to do is to keep quiet and pull yourself together first, reorganise yourself inside".

"Interpretations should happen when the analysand and analyst are on the same plane. The patient will hear the transference interpretation after the symbols are better structured. Otherwise you talk in overlapping languages, there is no complicity, no communication channel. The analyst has to use his mind in some way to symbolise and integrate his interventions into the analytic field so that the patient can understand and strengthen their mental mechanisms and their trust in the analytic work. What puts the pieces together are the emotions that the patient still cannot handle because of the continuous torpedoes of original sadism that comes to him, without elaboration by the own ego. This is the analysis of acute enactment. This is the analysis of acute enactment. With that we touch the death drive. At that moment there is a turning point in the technique. The intensity gives solidity and reality to the impact that it causes in the other person, in the analysand. Then we have the question of trauma and what this represents in your mind. We analysts have to work by sewing all these threads together through the manifestation of representation in a scene. This is a step that the patient is unable to take... to evoke the unconscious fantasies that are re-emerging and being revitalised in the relationship between the analyst and the patient".

Usefulness: All of the interviewees judge the enactment is useful. It is referred to as a technical tool for analysing and understanding the analytic field by favouring “the work of thinking together”.

Quotes:

“The concept of enactment has been becoming more widely accepted. In times past people were afraid of the idea. Today it is more communicative. It heats up treatment and, in a certain sense, something warms up and improves the analytic relationship. Concepts like this enliven the analyst. This is very welcome in order for analysts to also experiment “mistakes” and bring in more emotional responses from the analyst. So I think it allows analysts to be a bit afraid of getting involved with the patient, for me to fear getting too close to them or starting to notice something in me. The good part is this liveliness that comes into the field: it makes the dyad freer, you might say: it makes the field more lively. Enactment lets you think together”.

“The function of enactment is to bring early experiences into the setting, by both members of the dyad. So enactment has the purpose of dissolving collusions that set in”.

“There is no analytic process without enactment. Enactment is a spontaneous manifestation, not something that is undesirable in the process”.

Technical Comparisons: Differences between Freudian and Kleinian techniques are discussed. The interviewees also described technical differences in approaching enactment in psychoanalytic treatment (analysis) and psychotherapeutic treatment (psychotherapy), and work with children.

Quotes:

“Enactments happen even when there is only one session a week although analysis gives more space for this “heat” because of the greater frequency of sessions”.

“You have to pay attention when you are analysing a child in a way that is adequate to their development and you should verify whether that behaviour is natural or a result of conflict”.

It was noted that, to identify and work through enactments, the basic criterion is to “*Realise what is going on... to think*”. These words show that it is a lack of awareness of the inevitability of enactments that brings up problems in the field, and not necessarily the countertransference itself⁴⁴. In this sense, many authors describe the characteristic that enactments are perceived in retrospect^{19,20,28,29,36,37,41,45,50-55,58, 59,61-65}.

Another basic statement is about the time needed for this “realisation” to set in, because it depends on the personal characteristics and the professional experience of the analyst/therapist³²⁻³⁴. The analyst’s capacity for reflection, that is, their alpha function^{10,28,29,34}, is based on their perception of the feeling that something is blocking the flow of the process. This moment has been called either a *turning point*¹⁸, an analyst’s *shout of freedom*⁵⁹, a *breaking point*⁶⁶, a *sudden break-up*⁵⁸ or a *Moment M*^{28,29,31}. The continuity of a chronic enactment

is interrupted or, one might say, the analytic field, dominated by the death drive, is unblocked^{48,49}, as is the participation of the analyst/therapist as a narcissistic extension of the patient^{32,58}.

In the illustrative examples mentioned there are suggestions for analysts to “keep an eye on themselves”^{34,p.354}, and to keep a “dual state of consciousness”, that is, to be observer and participant at the same time^{67,68,69}. The analyst should also take a “second look” at the analytic field to detect impediments in the therapeutic process^{67,69,70}. This attitude of free-floating attention will help the therapeutic dynamism so that, in these moments of “breakage”, corresponding to acute enactments, the collusions (strongholds) and impasses cease^{53,58,65}. Reflecting on the “rules” imposed and taken on, analysts are able to identify the traumatic situation and bring the conflicts to resolution. This resolution will be obtained gradually through the work of reverie¹⁰, as objectively stated by one of the interviewees. This support, which is also an emotional exchange, favours figurability and a representation of pre-verbal feelings⁴⁹, and also stimulates the capacity to create symbols. The triangular space needed for mental maturation and autonomy is developed or recuperated³²⁻³⁵.

Final Category III: LEVEL OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

It is subdivided into three intermediate categories and it describes the set of elements that contribute to the development of professional experience.

Analytic Training: it refers to the set of procedures indicated for training psychoanalysts. It is sub-divided into initial categories of Study/Research/Theoretical Knowledge, Analyst’s own Analysis and Supervision

Quotes:

“If the therapist does not have the capacity to apprehend the unconscious, he is going to have trouble dealing with conflicts”.

“I think that the limit of any analyst is his own analysis. If you go into the process too narcissistically you fail to pay attention to the small signs that, in any situation, might indicate that an enactment might be emerging”.

“What you are as an analyst is what you can be with your patients. Based on their formation analysts can be sharper with their patients, feel less guilty and if an enactment comes up, it will necessarily hamper treatment”.

“Investing in increasing your perception [is good], and increasing your capacity for abstraction. If we don’t perceive ourselves, an analysis can go on for years. Impasses often happen when there is not enough selection, you might say, not enough care in selecting patients for analysis, or for a specific analyst. The analyst doesn’t ask himself: “Is this patient for me to analyse or would they be better off being analysed by someone else?”.

“I think psychoanalysis is changing. A new type of knowledge has come up in recent years, which is

neuroscience. It's a type of proof of what psychoanalysis has been saying. I think we are changing models. Things have to be woven together".

"Practice always comes before teaching. People start doing something and only after that can they really teach it. You have to do what we are doing here: study the question. This kind of research really moves me because it's always adding on something new. It's an opportunity to rethink a lot of things, think again about concepts. You grow a lot when you discuss things".

Clinical Practice: the processing and assimilation of situations, attitudes and positions experienced by the interviewees are discussed. Taken together they constitute the level of professional experience.

Quotes:

"I would have been a classical analyst with a certain difficulty to keep quiet. I like to talk. One patient said: 'The musicality of your voice calms me down.' Imagine having a patient like that and give him hard silence?! It's 'against my religion'. So you know when a child of yours needs you and you go and ask him: 'What happened? Tell me calmly. Let's see about this'".

"Clinical practice gradually showed me that it's only with a few patients that you can work doing what was imagined that a good analyst would do".

"One patient told me once, 'You sound more irritated today'. When my father died I went through a period of mourning. The patient must have perceived my emotional state but he added something else that made me even more irritated. As soon as I started thinking and moving into this attitude I started thinking about my father's death. Then I realized that, 'I should pull myself together, you know. I'm only partly here.'"

"A patient was talking to me but I was getting lost in the losses he was talking about. One day I said, 'Let's work on the time line.' From a psychoanalytic point of view, I was outside the setting, but from a psychotherapeutic, or human, point of view, I can guarantee that I was able to help the person. That helped us a lot to get organised and helped him to start working through some of his questions".

"I was in supervision in a training course and the teacher showed me what happens in the sessions. And I would think: 'I'm never going to be able to handle this myself. But as we mature and learn it gets a little easier'".

Reflections and Attitudes toward Professional Practice: It refers to behaviour considered proper and indispensable, based on the knowledge acquired with professional experience.

Quotes:

"I began demanding a lot from myself and I had some ethical questions about my work and my intellect. I went to study current authors who could give me answers to different questions. I started studying intensely about modernity and post-modernity and I got interested in the phenomena of post-modernity. I wanted to understand better the phenomena that were happening and that were sometimes in conflict in the clinic but

outside the clinic, too, in the world. I thought to myself that, 'If I'm the only one who is thinking this, then I have doubts about whether it is science or if it isn't science that I'm practicing. This started giving me a lot of pleasure and strongly validate some of the ideas I had'.

"Green always says you can't move into sacrificial functioning: you have to have a certain amount of humility, in the following sense: our work is so dynamic and so subtle. It is so delicate and sometimes, through the slightest signs, you begin to pull the thread that's going to take you to a much broader understanding. This has great value as a psychotherapist: humility about not knowing, which is natural for our work, this constant not knowing what is challenging you".

"[Psychoanalytic] technique has evolved a lot. It demands more from you. Today analysts have to take stances that are very participative, very active".

This category indicates how the interviewees constituted and develop their professional behavior: "Analytic treatment is not a 'voyage across the ocean without a compass'. You must to have orientation, objective." and "The analyst is always me. This's the stable factor."

The tripod of one's personal analysis, study and supervision are emphasised as essential. The construction of professional identity is a process resulting from intellectual and emotional investments that are continuous and simultaneous and are what make it possible to develop vital therapeutic experiences^{17,32,33,36,39,41,42,50,53-56,58,61,65}.

Final considerations

Considered a phenomenon, it has been recorded that enactment is a word specifically understood in psychoanalytic clinical theory and practice and not in theories of general psychology.

The descriptions provided in this study revealed the fundamental part of the concept of enactment and include its basic technical aspects. One can also note the important association between the two aspects cited: theory and technique, on the one hand, and the experience of the interviewed analysts, on the other.

The understanding of the enactment occurs through the perception of the mechanism of projective identification, both as a defense and as indicative of the pattern of object relations manifest unconsciously in the analytical field. The notion that projective identification can communicate about the mental mind of the patient is accessed through the sensitivity and reflection of the analyst that is its alpha function, in the Bionian terms. The perception of enactment favours the construction of the figurability necessary for mental balance. Then the intersubjectivist psychoanalytic school being described as basic to understand enactment.

Enactments are useful for detecting possible conflicts and blind spots, functioning as a "tool" technical. They serve for the professional to use his sensibility and his mind as therapeutic resources. The quality of the relationship established between the analytical pair allows to indicate the types of therapeutic interventions most indicated for each problem presented.

The length of time of an analyst's professional experience, associated with their formation and personal investment in broadening their knowledge, can provide them with attitudes with which the techniques they have learned can be used more spontaneously and with greater security.

By integrating experienced, knowledge and sensitivity, the analyst avoids the image of 'cold and distant' professionals; they see the therapeutic relationship as essentially human. As one of the interviewees said: *"That notion of a silent analyst saying 'uh-huh' and 'hmmm' and so forth is a thing of the past"*.

The continuity of this study, constituting a new sample, with psychoanalysts and psychotherapists from different institutions or schools, can contribute new data.

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Contribuições: Charlie Trelles Severo – Conceitualização, Investigação, Metodologia;
Maria Lucia Tiellet Nunes – Conceitualização, Investigação, Metodologia, Supervisão, Validação;
Cláudio Laks Eizirik – Análise estatística, Gerenciamento de Recursos, Investigação, Metodologia, Redação –
Preparação do original, Supervisão, Validação.

Correspondence

Charlie Trelles Severo

e-mail: ctsevero@gmail.com / e-mail alternativo: ctsevero7@gmail.com

Maria Lucia Tiellet Nunes

e-mail: marialuciatiellet@gmail.com

Cláudio Laks Eizirik

e-mail: ceizirik.ez@terra.com.br

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