



Technique and final cause in psychoanalysis: Four ways of looking at one moment

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This paper argues that if one considers just a single clinical moment there may be no principled way to choose among different approaches to psychoanalytic technique. One must in addition take into account what Aristotle called the final cause of psychoanalysis, which this paper argues is freedom. However, freedom is itself an open-ended concept with many aspects that need to be explored and developed from a psychoanalytic perspective. This paper considers one analytic moment from the perspectives of the techniques of Paul Gray, Hans Loewald, the contemporary Kleinians and Jacques Lacan. It argues that, if we are to evaluate these techniques, we must take into account the different conceptions of freedom they are trying to facilitate.

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Introduction

This paper is motivated by two questions which arise at opposite ends of a spectrum. At the experience-near end of a practicing psychoanalyst at work in the midst of an analytic hour, my question is: Why should I do one thing rather than another? What, if anything, grounds my choice about how to conceptualize and act in a significant moment in analysis? At the other end of the spectrum, my question is: What is psychoanalysis for? I do not have answers to either of these two questions. However, I have become convinced that these questions are interrelated: indeed, that one cannot answer one without answering the other. If one is to have a clear sense of why one is doing what one is doing in an analytic moment (as opposed to something else), one needs to have a sense of what psychoanalysis is for; conversely, one cannot have a textured sense of what psychoanalysis is all about unless one also understands how that overall conception of its value filters down and informs the analytic moment.

I want to argue for three claims that *prima facie* it might seem impossible that they could all be true together. First, if one considers a given clinical moment from different psychoanalytic perspectives one can find genuine differences about how to approach the moment. To that end, I shall consider a single clinical moment from the perspectives of four currently popular approaches: those of Paul Gray, Hans Loewald, the

contemporary Kleinians and Jacques Lacan. *I only intend to give an account that is in the spirit of each; no doubt other formulations could be offered from each perspective.* (I am also not going to try to give a complete interpretation from any particular point of view, but rather to provide some salient markers by which one may begin to see the same moment from different perspectives.) I will argue that while there may be similarities and areas of overlap, there are also significant differences between these approaches.

Second, it is at least *possible* that, in trying to choose amongst these approaches, there might be nothing in the analysand's mind at that moment, nothing in the total transference situation, nothing in the intersubjective or interpersonal relations between analysand and analyst, nothing in the transitional space, nothing in the analysand's brain-state – in short, nothing in the present state of the analysand or the analytic situation – that could definitively settle which approach to use. It follows from this that we cannot look to the analysand's psychic history either: for if her past made a difference, it would somehow be making a difference in the present, and we have ruled that out.

Third, it is nevertheless true that there can be principled bases for making a choice amongst these different approaches.

But if, on the one hand, there are real differences amongst approaches yet, on the other hand, no basis in the analytic present for choosing, how could there be any principled basis for choice? The answer is: we have got to go back to the future. That is, we need to consider what the analysis is *aiming towards*. This is what Aristotle called the final cause: that which the psychoanalytic process aims to facilitate or bring about (Aristotle, 1950, pp. 192–200; 1984, pp. 329–42; Lear, 1988, pp. 15–54). If we grasp what psychoanalysis is *for* we can then evaluate a technical approach in terms of how well or badly it facilitates that which it is trying to bring about. I want to suggest that a wide range of analysts *already* agree (often implicitly rather than explicitly) that psychoanalysis seeks to promote *some* kind of freedom, but *freedom* functions as an open-ended signifier: it points us in the direction of openness, but ironically is itself open-ended about what this might mean. Precisely because the concept of freedom lacks determinate, fixed boundaries, it is of special value: we are invited seriously to consider – as well as play freely – with disparate images of freedom. Towards the end of this paper I will suggest that freedom, as it concerns psychoanalytic practice, has disparate aspects and that the different technical approaches can be evaluated in terms of which aspect(s) of freedom they facilitate. However, we are still at an early stage of thinking (working, playing) through what freedom might mean in a psychoanalytic context. One of the central aims of this paper is to invite us to think broadly and deeply about what freedom is – what its many faces are – and why it/they might matter. But for all the open-ended unclarity of being at this early stage of reflection, we are in a position to see that genuine differences among technical approaches do not imply their ultimate incompatibility: but one can only grasp this if one takes the idea of final cause into account.

Four ways of looking at a clinical moment

1. *From the perspective of the analysand's conscious ego defenses: Paul Gray*

One would have to go back to Freud's Dora case to find a cough that has been as commented on as that of Mr. A in analysis with Dr. Lawrence Levenson (Levenson, 1998; Levenson *et al.*, 2006; Phillips, 2006). Dr. Levenson wrote this article to explain and defend the technical ideas advocated by Dr. Paul Gray (1982, 2005). I can here only give the briefest account. Mr. A had entered analysis because of anxiety, social inhibition and a view of himself as wearing a "nice mask to hide the real, ugly, nasty, me" (Levenson, 1998, p. 855). He had difficulty with his aggressive impulses, particularly with those directed toward people in authority, and this became prominent in the transference. When, towards the end of his analysis, he brought up termination, he spoke in terms of 'warning' Dr. Levenson or about 'quitting'. But he also spoke of all the gains he had made. He wanted Levenson to know how much happier, freer and more relaxed he felt. He was pleased with the life changes he had been able to make, and he knew that these external changes were a manifestation of significant internal changes. But then there was this cough. It began with an infection, but it lingered, and it would emerge in a session when Mr. A would start talking about hostile feelings. Mr. A himself began to wonder about the meaning of his cough.

[He] did not recognize their connection to hostile wishes until an extended fit of coughing occurred when he suddenly became intensely angry with me, saying, "Do I want to tell you to fuck off!" He then began coughing uncontrollably for several minutes, finally leaving the office for a minute to go to the bathroom for a drink of water. Returning to the couch, he asked, "Why would I want to tell you to fuck off? You haven't done anything but been here."

I said, "Maybe that's why."

"Yes, you're the doctor," he replied. "Why haven't you cured me? I've been waiting for you to fix me."

This was the moment when Mr. A. experienced the full intensity of his hostility toward me in the waning months of the analysis.

(Levenson, 1998, pp. 857–8)

From this Gray–Levenson perspective, there are three important points to be made about this interpretation. First, the interpretation is meant to analyze transference of authority rather than rely upon it. Gray emphasized the importance of Freud's relatively late insight that the superego is largely a defensive structure used to inhibit and disguise aggression. What is valuable about the moment, from this Gray-inspired perspective, is that the analysis does not terminate simply with the sincere expression of gratitude. Rather, the analysand is able to see from his own vivid experience, in the here-and-now of the analytic situation, that he is also angry and disappointed. And he is at least in a position to recognize that his sincere gratitude is

helping him ignore his angry feelings. Thus Mr. A can gain insight into the dynamic nature of his own feelings. Superego defenses are here analyzed rather than unwittingly relied upon. Second, the analysis is not relying upon the internalization of the analyst as benign superego-figure. Internalization largely consists in unconscious mental processes that thus largely bypass the analysand's growing ability consciously to monitor and observe her mental activity. Gray was critical of those approaches that emphasized the replacement of the analysand's formerly punitive superego with a more benign one based on an image of the analyst. Gray argued that, while such approaches may have genuine therapeutic value, they are nevertheless based on remnants of the old hypnotic technique which ought to be abandoned; for it ultimately compromised the possibility for autonomy that a rigorous analysis could promote (Gray, 1982, p. 52; Strachey, 1934). And this leads to Gray's third point: that the ultimate goal of psychoanalysis is to promote the analysand's capacity for rational autonomy. For Gray this essentially involves the analysand's ability to observe her own mental states and processes as they are emerging in the here-and-now and assess for herself how she wants to live with them. While there has been a lively debate about how best to appropriate Gray's ideas, to what extent they are compatible or incompatible with other approaches, there is no doubt that with these points, Gray made a significant contribution to our understanding of psychoanalytic technique.

2. Working from the perspective of mourning: Hans Loewald

Loewald, developing ideas from Freud, has argued that the termination phase is a process of mourning that inevitably involves internalization: for it consists in a rebuilding and re-organization of the superego-ego structure, which had been partially loosened during the analysis (Loewald, 1960, 1962; Lear, 2003, pp. 89–133; compare Phillips, 2006). Obviously, there are a number of ways that one can approach this clinical moment from a Loewaldian perspective. But when I look at this moment in the light of Loewald's work, I am struck by the phrase, 'Do I want to tell you to fuck off'. This is a strange locution: not the way an ordinary English speaker would tell someone to fuck off, or anything else. There is room thus to wonder whether the purported unity of this expression is superficial. The first part of the phrase, '*Do I want to tell you to ...*' is the nascent stage of the explicit and conscious formulation of a wish. 'Fuck off', rather than being the object of the wish, perhaps moves the speaker away from the wish which, in the moment, was too much to speak. 'Do I want to tell you ...' is a classic expression of mourning – and its anticipation. That, for Loewald, is what the termination phase is. In imagination, as we sit by the grave of a loved one, or contemplate a love-relationship that is over, we tend to think about what we should have said to the other person, while it was still possible to do so. 'I should have told her', 'If only we had discussed ...', and so on. By the time we get to the 'fuck off!' part of the sentence, the sentence as a whole sounds like an exclamation. But, syntactically speaking, 'Do I want to tell you ...' has the form of a question-in-the-making. So there is room to wonder whether 'fuck off' not only obliterates a wish from getting expressed,

but also obliterates a question from getting asked. It is not a wild stretch to wonder whether Mr. A is wondering about what he wants to say to Dr. Levenson before their relationship formally comes to an end.

It may of course be that Mr. A's wish *is* to tell his analyst to fuck off: in which case the asking of the question, the expression of the wish *and* its gratification all come together in the same expression. But given the oddness of the overall expression, there is a question whether the last part of the locution disrupted the expression of his wish rather than expressed it. And, obviously, the 'fuck off' is gratifying *some* need for expression. But given the oddness of the overall expression, it seems reasonable to wonder whether the 'Do I want to tell you ...' was *en route* to expressing a very different wish – entangled in longing and mourning – and whether the angry outburst disrupted his emerging thoughts and feelings. In ordinary English, 'fuck off' is used to repel an advance when one feels intruded upon. That is, 'fuck off' is paradigmatically a negative *response* to someone suddenly intruding upon one with the question 'Let's fuck!' But if one thinks that 'Let's fuck'/'Fuck off!' are twinned as a paradigm of proposal and response, then when one suddenly hears the second part of the dyad, might well wonder: what specific form did 'Let's fuck!' take this time?¹ And who uttered it? In particular, does Mr. A have any experience of the analyst intruding upon him – or of somehow getting in the way of what he wants to say to him?

So, between the Loewald- and Gray-approaches, as I have here depicted them, there is a difference of emphasis. The Gray-approach focuses on the second part of the sentence, the expression of angry and aggressive feelings, and encourages the analysand to recognize that they are *his* feelings. The Loewaldian approach focuses on the first part – the 'Do I want to tell you ...?' – as the perhaps squelched attempt to say what needs to be said in a period of mourning. It seems to me that both approaches can agree that analytic technique ought to be directed towards, and not bypass, the analysand's own developing ego-capacity to observe and rationally assess his own mental functioning. They can agree there is a need to stay close to the so-called 'surface' of the analytic hour and to abjure reliance on the analyst's authority. But Phillips (2006) is right that one can accept these working guidelines of analytic technique and yet remain flexible as to what counts as 'surface'. Some analytic surfaces are thick or jelly-like, porous or bubbling as though fed by an underwater spring. The associations of a neurotic analysand – by Freud's own theory of primary process – will be rife with possibilities. Obviously, some of these possibilities may be repressed and thus not immediately accessible to the analysand, but I agree with Phillips that one needs to be alive to possibilities that are right there – available – for one to have a viable conception of workable surface (Phillips, 2006, p. 158). (Gray, I believe, agreed with this point, as do those who are influenced by him.) What is on the surface of this analytic moment is that Mr. A has conscious

¹Phillips gives as an example the idea that there is sexual content in this moment: the word 'fuck' occurs twice in two sentences each of which also has the phrase 'I want' and an explicit reference to 'you', the analyst. And he notes Loewald's claim that, in the termination phase, male analysands regularly sexualized internalization fantasies – such as fellatio of or impregnation by the analyst (Phillips, 2006, p. 157; Loewald, 1973, p. 327).

questions about what he wants – more specifically, about what he wants *to say* to Dr. Levenson. “Do I want to tell you ...”, “Why would I want to tell you ...?” From a Loewaldian perspective, I think Mr. A could be encouraged to say more about what these wants are via a line of questioning that need not be too intrusive or directive. Mr. A’s curiosity centers on why he would want to tell his analyst to fuck off; my curiosity focuses on why, if that is what Mr. A wants, did he use such a strange locution to express it? In response to Mr. A’s question, “Why would I want to tell you to fuck off?”, I, in my Loewaldian persona, might say, “Do you? What you said was, ‘*Do I want to tell you to fuck off*’. I wonder if you have a question about what you want to say to me?” Depending on what Mr. A said, this might lead to other questions about what he wants to say. Obviously, ‘fuck off’ is the most dramatic fragment of the verbal expression – and as such Mr. A’s attention is drawn to it. But perhaps Mr. A’s attention is itself functioning as a resistance – leading him away from his most pressing questions. An open-ended inquiry might facilitate the resumption of a process of the speaking of what wants to be said. If the termination phase is essentially one of mourning, then one should expect it to be a continually disrupted and resisted process of speaking what needs to be said before the (external part of the) relation is over.

I have elsewhere argued that the therapeutic action of psychoanalysis consists in developing a capacity for irony in a special sense of that term (Lear, 2003, 2006). It seems to me that both the Loewald- and Gray-approaches could accept this – though their emphases might differ. Irony facilitates the analysand’s capacity to move freely between id-meanings, ego-meanings and superego meanings embedded in a single expression. So, in this case, Mr. A’s statement, “You haven’t done anything but been here” has the conscious, ego-meaning, ‘You have been a steady and loyal companion on this analytic journey.’ In relation to the superego it expresses the angry disappointment, ‘You’ve only sat on your ass, and haven’t done anything to cure me.’ And in relation to the id, it expresses the wish and fear that Levenson make the sexual advance to which Mr. A could say ‘fuck off!’ Levenson places emphasis on Mr. A’s becoming aware of aggressive feelings hidden behind sincere expressions of gratitude. A Loewaldian might emphasize psychic integration, a hallmark of the therapeutic action of psychoanalysis – but these are compatible. Dr. Levenson’s comment facilitated Mr. A’s building a bridge over which he could travel back and forth in thought between his ego- and superego-meanings of “You haven’t done anything but been there”. He is thereby able to bring together in the here-and-now his sincere feelings of gratitude with his equally sincere feelings of disappointment, anger and even rage.

It is worth noting an important ambiguity in the claim that a certain technique or conception of therapeutic action ‘relies on internalization’. On one reading, the claim is that a technique explicitly or implicitly *encourages* the internalization of the analyst as a benign, non-critical figure. These are the techniques that Gray criticized as relying upon, rather than analyzing, the transference of authority. Insofar as internalization is an unconscious process that bypasses the analysand’s ego-capacity to recognize

and understand what is happening, then a technique that encourages these unconscious processes will, Gray argued, inevitably shortchange the analyst's emerging capacity for analytic self-understanding. However, there is another sense in which analysis 'relies on internalization': namely, that it recognizes that internalization is an inevitable part of the analytic process and thus tries to take it into account in an analytically responsible way. In this sense, analysis 'relies on internalization' in the same sense that it 'relies on unconscious motivation' or that it 'relies on transference'. That is, it is a crucial part of reality that needs to be addressed in the right sort of way. It seems to me that Loewald's conception of therapeutic action relies on internalization in this latter sense – and as such escapes Gray's criticism. Indeed, from Loewald's perspective, precisely because one takes internalization to be an inevitable aspect of the termination phase, there is all the more reason to be on the lookout for its manifestations so as to be better placed to analyze them. One may accept that internalization inevitably occurs and still be committed to analyzing it whenever manifestations of it present themselves. (Thus I believe that an integration of the Gray and Loewald perspectives is possible.)

3. The Kleinian perspective: Working with phantasies as they manifest themselves in the here and now

The contemporary Kleinians have concentrated on how phantasies actually work (for example, Bion, 1959, 1962; Hinshelwood, 1994; Joseph, 1989; Meltzer, 1978; O'Shaughnessy, 1981; Rosenfeld, 1987; Segal, 1982, 1991; Spillius, 1998a, 1998b, 2007; Wollheim, 1984, 1993, 1999). In particular, they have helped us understand how phantasies can both be 'conceived' and expressed in corporeal terms. From this Kleinian perspective, Mr. A's coughing fit, his getting up from the couch, leaving the room and going to the bathroom is clearly an enactment within the total transference situation – and the Kleinians have helped us to understand that we need to understand not only its symbolic meaning but also its actual efficacy. Projective identification and introjection have symbolic content, but they are also actual and efficacious disruptions of the mind. So, from this point of view, in the coughing fit Mr. A might be gagging on his internalization of the analyst, or he may be choking on his own expression of gratitude. It may have various symbolic meanings; but, whatever its symbolic meaning, it is also a successful attack upon and disruption of the analytic hour. It is perhaps an envious attack upon the analyst and his capacity to keep an analytic session going. Immediately before the coughing fit, Mr. A is trying to formulate an utterance whose beginning – "Do I want to tell you ..." – looks like it will be a question about what he wants to say. There is then the expression "fuck off!" From a Kleinian perspective we should wonder whether, rather than being a completion of that sentence, the expression was an active attack on the sentence-that-was-coming-into-being. That is, although Mr. A injected a meaningful phrase, "fuck off", he might also have burped or coughed or giggled or sneezed or felt a sudden urge to go to the bathroom. We need thus to distinguish two different ways in which the

expression ‘fuck off’ can be used. First, it can be used to assert an imperative: *that you should fuck off*. Second, it can be used to disrupt the very attempt to make an assertion. Although it is a meaningful phrase, a person can learn to use it as a form of interjection that disrupts whatever meaningful activity is in the process of unfolding. In the first case, there is the assertion of a negative thought; in the second there is a negative disruption of the attempt to formulate a thought.

Let us suppose that ‘fuck off’ is being used in this second way. Then Mr. A begins his locution – “Do I want to tell you ...” – with a question that is directed to his analyst, but the explicative “fuck off” would be directed not to the analyst, but to the emerging question. I wonder whether, in uttering “fuck off”, Mr. A is speaking to an inner voice emerging into consciousness. This could well be the voice of an internal object, perhaps an introject of the analyst. From a Kleinian point of view, one has to wonder whether voices from his inner world are starting to intrude too much into consciousness, this is causing anxiety, and Mr. A utters “fuck off!” *to disrupt the whole scene*. This is what Bion calls an attack on linking. On this reading, with ‘fuck off’ Mr. A attacks his own ability to ask a question.

The coughing fit renders speech impossible. And getting up from the couch and going to the bathroom essentially closes down the analytic process. This is, I think, an example of the power of projective and introjective phantasies as the contemporary Kleinians conceive them. Now when Mr. A comes back, he asks, “Why would I want to tell you to fuck off ...?” That is, he returns with a question about the last thing *he said*. There is no reference to the last thing *he did*, nor to the last thing that, as it were, overtook him. His question thus bypasses what, for Kleinians, would be the central manifestation of phantasy. Is his question being put to a defensive use? Mr. A is moving from thing said – “fuck off!” – to a question about thing said – “why would I want to tell you to fuck off?” – as though the issue was the aggressive *content* of what he had just said. This ignores the fact that between thing said and thing said there was a phantasied attack upon his capacity to say anything at all. From this Kleinian perspective, the analyst’s saying “Maybe that’s why” focuses on one manifestation of aggression but, along with the analysand, ignores another. For in this moment there is not only an expression of aggression towards the analyst, there an attack on his own capacity to think and to speak.

Elsewhere I have argued that we should we should categorize the observable mental processes that emerge in psychoanalysis as falling into two broad categories, swerve and break (Lear, 2000, pp. 114–35; 2005, pp. 154–63). We see *swerve* in the loose associations of primary process, dream images, metaphors and relatively free associations. We see *breaks* in the active disruption of swerve-like mental processes and ordinary secondary-process thinking. The aim of this distinction is not to introduce two more species of mental activity, but rather to establish genus-categories in which the already-established forms of mental activity can be located. This allows us to see a higher unity in what might otherwise look like very disparate phenomena. I take it that the minute breaks in sentence formation that Paul Gray tracks, certain (though not all) slips of the tongue and parapraxes, projective and

introjective phantasies as well as projective identification that Kleinians are attuned to, as well as massive attacks on linking that Bion describes – all of these are instances of break.

4. Jacques Lacan

In a Lacanian spirit, I would view Mr. A's cough as an expression of an excess that stands outside (and disrupts) the chain of associations (Lacan, 1978, 1986, 1991). For Lacan, when the analysand is sincerely thanking the analyst for all the accomplishments of the analysis – a more genuinely happy marriage, the ability to thrive in a family, the ability to inhabit his job more whole-heartedly – this is an ego thanking its master for its alienation (Lacan, 1988a, 1988b, 2002). It would be typical of American ego-psychology, Lacan thinks, to treat this as an acceptable outcome of analysis. And, in a Lacanian mode, I would wonder whether these purported achievements express imaginary identifications, and as such block the symbolic work of the unconscious (Fink, 1997, 2007). The cough is an excess that cannot be contained in this *méconnaissance*. Analytically speaking, it is an occasion for disrupting a false outcome.

The cough is an interruption in a flow of thank-you(s) and a list of identifications. It culminates in a verbal outburst 'Do I want to tell you to fuck off!' which, from a Lacanian perspective, looks like the speech of the subject breaking through. This is a highly significant transition: from *cough* to *f-cough* to *fuck off*!² It is a move from disruption of a fundamental fantasy to a verbal rejection of it. The fantasy is that if Mr. A could only satisfy the Analyst's demands (through a series of imaginary identifications), He, the One who is supposed to know, would finally give him that missing thing that would overcome the lack in his being. (I use a capital A because we are not here dealing with the empirical analyst, but rather with Dr. Levenson as the embodiment of a transcendent Other whose demands and desires lie beyond the realm of mere empirical experience.) This is an analytically significant moment, for in effect the subject is telling the Analyst to get off its back. In effect, what the subject is saying is, 'Enough already! I'll settle for the lack of being!'

If I were a Lacanian, I would be inclined to 'punctuate' the session there – that is, end the session with that verbal outburst (Lacan, 2006, p. 313; Fink, 2007, chs. 3–4). (This is an imaginative exercise: in my analytic practice I stick to the 50-minute session.) The hypothesis would be that this verbal outburst was in fact a moment of unblocking of the symbolic work of the unconscious. One would leave the analysand to carry on his own unconscious symbolic activity. And one can see that to let the session continue is to allow the ego to ask its question, "Why would I want to tell you ...?" Thus there is, from a Lacanian perspective, a danger of collaborating with the ego in covering over the subject's speech. Ironically, though, if I were (in my imagination, in my Lacanian mode) to let the session continue, *I would use the very same words* that Dr. Levenson used to address Mr. A's question,

²This formulation is due to Dr. Nancy Olson. See her marvelous contribution in Levenson *et al.* (2006).

“Maybe that’s why”. But my understanding of why these words were appropriate would differ. For Gray and Levenson, the crucial issue is the continued analysis of superego defense: helping the analysand to recognize how he unconsciously manages his own aggression, even in the termination phase. The aim is to expand the range of conscious, ego-functioning. For a Lacanian, the virtue of this remark is that it brings the analysand back to his own words and facilitates the unblocking of an *unconscious* symbolic process. The aim then is not to facilitate autonomous ego functioning – whatever that means – but to remove obstacles from the processes of unconscious symbolization.

The end of technique

In my analytic work I find myself drawn on different occasions to each of these differing approaches. Is there any principle that might justify this, or am I just moving about according to what ‘feels right’ at a given moment? While analysts ought to be able to trust their intuitions up to a point, they also, on reflection, ought to be able to say something about it. There needs to be some basis for supporting or correcting those clinical intuitions.

The key, I think, is to recognize that, while there may be significant technical differences between these approaches, it does not thereby follow that there is a difference of technique. How, after all, do we enumerate techniques? By way of analogy, imagine someone who early in the morning goes to milk his cows; strangely, he takes some of the milk and rubs it into the cows’ backs as a kind of massage; he then goes and waters the corn he is growing in his fields; he goes to his forge and makes tiny nails; he then seems to be twisting hemp; he then goes to the computer and tries to finish designing a website; then, while resting in the afternoon, he spends a long time staring at his toes. How many things is he doing? Given that this is my imagined example, I have the answer: from the point of view of technique, he is doing one thing, making shoes. He is an old-fashioned artisan. He grows a special corn to feed the cows: it produces just the leather that is right for the shoes he wants to make. The milk-massage is in order to bring out the right sort of sheen in the leather. He makes his own nails to assemble the shoes. He makes his own shoe-laces. He is going to sell his shoes on the Internet. The reason we give shoes primacy here is that everything else is for the sake of making and selling them. The only reason he is growing corn is to feed the cows, and the only reason he raising cows is to make his own leather; and the only reason he is doing that is to make and sell shoes. Were the life of an artisan to become impossible, he would give it *all* up (Anscombe, 1963; Thompson, 2008; Vogler, 2002). Perhaps he would become a psychoanalyst.

The important point is that the *only* principle of unity in all these disparate activities is provided by what Aristotle called the final cause: shoes. It is that towards which all the activities are aiming: it is what they are for, what they are aiming to promote. If one ignores the final cause, all one can see are differences. But once one has the final cause in mind, one can see that there need be no conflict between, say, punching holes in leather and also

trying to protect it. The initial appearance of conflict evaporates when one can see that towards which all these activities are aiming: a shoe made of beautiful leather with lace-holes punched in just the right places. It is only by reference to the final cause that we can judge all the disparate activities to be rational or irrational. If he were just some guy who rubs milk into cows' backs, makes little nails and stares at his toes, he would be a strange character. Without the final cause, the disparate acts are a mad hodgepodge; but in the light of the final cause, all the acts are disciplined to a unified activity of making shoes.

Moreover, once one sees that the final cause is shoes, one can see that there might in principle be different ways of reaching the same outcome. Two people might make different choices about what they do next, they might make different choices at various points along the way, but they also might ultimately agree that they have each reached the same outcome, the production of an excellent pair of shoes. In such a case, then, although there is one sense in which they are acting differently, there is another sense in which acting in exactly the same way: they are both making shoes.

Now there are two important differences between psychoanalysis and shoemaking. First, in psychoanalysis there is no finite or determinate end of the process. An act of shoemaking comes to an end in the production of a pair of shoes. By contrast, psychoanalysis lacks any such clear stopping point. Let us say that psychoanalysis aims to promote of *psychological health* or well-being. So far, this is a formal claim, not a substantive one. 'Psychological health' is thus far a signifier for that, whatever it is, which psychoanalysis legitimately aims to promote. Psychological health seems to function as an *infinite end* in this sense: it is not the sort of thing that once one achieves it, the process is over (Rödl, 2007). Rather, psychic health is manifest in the entire life of the living being while that being is living well. Second, there need be no determinate distinction between the process of achieving psychic health and psychic health itself. Thus, psychoanalysis *need* not be conceived as a process directed towards achieving a result that is distinct from itself. On occasions, at least, psychoanalysis can itself be a manifestation of psychic health which promotes psychic health.

But these important caveats notwithstanding, psychoanalysis has a final cause – *however open-ended, indeterminate, continuing and active it may be*: there is something that the psychoanalytic process aims to promote. Freedom is the final cause of psychoanalysis: freedom is the kind of health that psychoanalysis aims to facilitate. Of course, we have not yet said that anything determinate as *freedom* functions largely as an open-ended signifier. It is that about which we need to get clearer. I want to argue that the freedom that concerns psychoanalysis has myriad aspects – and that the different approaches to the analytic moment I have considered can be differentiated according to which aspects of freedom they facilitate. Thus it is a mistake to think we can evaluate these different approaches *simply* by looking ever more closely at the moment itself. Looking carefully at the moment in the here-and-now *is* important, but we *also* need to look more holistically at the context in which that moment is embedded. If we do, we will see that, like every successful psychoanalytic treatment, the larger context has an overall

direction – from worse to better off (according to some standard of psychic well-being that still needs to be spelled out). Thus we can evaluate an approach not only in terms of how well it discloses what is already going on in the analysand's psyche, but also how well it facilitates the analysand's movement in the direction of psychic well-being. To do the former we may look for the *efficient* causes of Mr. A's outburst; to do the latter we must look to the *final* cause of psychoanalysis.

Freedom as final cause

When we talk about psychoanalysis facilitating an emerging freedom in the analysand, we need to develop and enrich our sense of what we mean. We tend to gesture in the direction of a family of notions – *freedom of mind*, *freedom of speech* and *freedom to be and let be* – all of which can be considered as aspects of freedom. (This is only a preliminary list.) If we can see the different approaches as facilitating different aspects of freedom then we might be able to integrate them into a differentiated unity. This is a unity we could only see in the light of a final cause. This does not mean that there are no genuine disagreements among the approaches, only that there might nevertheless be ways of integrating them. Lest the reader think I am advocating eclecticism when it comes to technique, my view is: we have *no idea* what eclecticism is until we have an adequate conception of unity and difference when it comes to technique. At present, this is what we lack. And we cannot address that lack adequately until we have thought more deeply about the role of final cause in psychoanalysis. If, after sustained reflection, we can see any of the approaches as involving a misconception of freedom, that would be a reason for rejecting it. The point, then, is not to advocate eclecticism, but to discover whatever genuine unity and genuine differences there are in the psychoanalytic approach to human being.

1. Freedom of mind

This is itself constituted of ingredient capacities; and the approaches of Gray, Loewald, Klein and Lacan make different kinds of contributions. Gray's technique emphasizes *freedom of reflection*: the ability to observe and reflect upon one's own mental states as they arise in the here and now; Loewald's technique emphasizes *open-minded* engagement with the world via the dissolution of rigid transference structures; contemporary Kleinians focus on *freedom from attack* on the mind's own ability to function. Lacanians focus on the *freedom of the unconscious* to resume its symbolic activity. In different ways, they all make contributions to the *free play* of the mind. And, rather than exclusive alternatives, they seem to me to be overlapping strategies, perhaps with different foci that nevertheless contribute to an overall conception of mental freedom.

The idea that the capacity to reflect on one's mental states is a form of freedom derives from Kant. He argued that, once we gain reflective awareness of a mental state, we thereby take a step back from it and gain some choice as to what to do with it. Reflective awareness thus frees us from living in the grip of our impulses. And that is why the development of this

perceptual capacity is itself an expression of our increasing rational autonomy. As Gray's technique emphasizes the development of the capacity for reflective observation of one's mental states (especially defenses against split-off aggressive thoughts), the accent of Loewald's technique is on freeing the mind from the 'ghosts of the unconscious', thus facilitating psychic integration and more authentic engagement with the world. Neurosis is inevitably a constriction of freedom since a neurotic inevitably imposes on the world a distorted and confined set of meanings which he or she mistakenly takes to be reality. So, to stick with Mr. A, it seems plausible to say that, before he entered the analysis, he lived in a world in which *either* he had to wear 'a nice mask to hide the real, ugly, nasty, me' *or* he would explode with fury and provoke murderous retaliation. This either/or expressed all the possibilities there were for him – and thus it expressed his world. The analysis provided Mr. A with a possibility for new possibilities. He came to understand, in an existentially vivid way, that there were possibilities for living without a mask that need not provoke retaliation, ways to express his aggression as well as his sexuality that he need not consider ugly or nasty. In short, his world opened up with new possibilities for living. This possibility for new possibilities is essentially linked to the mourning process by which old images are mourned and eventually given up. As Loewald memorably put it, in analysis:

[the] ghosts of the unconscious, imprisoned by defenses and symptoms, are allowed to taste blood, are let loose. In the daylight of analysis the ghosts of the unconscious are laid and led to rest as ancestors whose power is taken over and transformed into a newer intensity of present life, of the secondary process and contemporary objects.

(Loewald, 1960, 2000, p. 249)

For the contemporary Kleinians, as we have seen, the emphasis is on the mind's attack on its own ability to think. Somewhat similar to Gray, the Kleinians emphasize tracking the vicissitudes of anxiety – though they are more focused on the massive disruptions of projective and introjective fantasies. Here the mind needs to be freed from its own attacks on its capacity to function as mind.

2. Freedom of speech

Psychoanalysis promotes the analysand's capacity to speak his mind. This is *in part* the capacity to say what comes into one's mind – a capacity that develops in the analytic situation as the analysand over time becomes less fearful of the analyst and of the contents of her own thoughts. But is also, and perhaps more importantly, a capacity for taking oneself up into one's words. Thus when Mr. A first said, "You haven't done anything but been there", it was only his ego speaking. One can imagine an analytic scenario in which after he spent some time exploring the related id- and superego-meanings, he could come back laughingly to the same phrase, infused with a vibrancy coming from all parts of his psyche. He is now able, in a profound sense, to speak his mind. Vibrancy enters his words – a living sense that he

is alive in his words – that was not there before. Again, I think a capacity for irony is crucial to this capacity to speak for oneself. All the techniques we have examined facilitate freedom of speech, but with different emphases. The Gray approach facilitates an analysand's capacity to speak his aggression in emotionally vibrant ways. Loewald's approach facilitates the analysand's ability to speak of (internal and external) objects in new and living ways. The aspect of Kleinian technique I have examined seeks to restore the capacity for speech when it has been attacked, disrupted or even shut down.

For Lacan, the disruption of speech is also an occasion for the breaking-out of free speech. This is free speech by the subject, as opposed to the ego or I. Thus, as we have seen, the triumphal moment of free speech in the vignette is the “fuck off!” which blasts through what are perhaps the ego's last defensive attempt: to ask “Do I want to tell you ...?” In the “fuck off!”, it is not Mr. A speaking; it is the subject finally able to get a word in edgeways. This is a place where competing images of freedom need to be thought through more deeply than they have been thus far. Let us grant Lacan that ego-formation is in some sense a defensive structure that takes on the signifiers available in the culture at the time; let us also grant his critique that a typical use of the phrase ‘adaptation to reality’ by at least some ego psychologists of the mid-20th century meant, in effect, acceptance of the bourgeois structures of American society. But Lacan is trying to make a more sweeping point: that ego-formation *as such* is a form of imprisonment in alienating signifiers. It is instructive to compare Lacan and Loewald: for both have been influenced, and similarly influenced, by Kant, Hegel and Heidegger in the conceptualizations of subject and object-relations. For Lacan, the fact that we are ‘thrown’ into a culture and historical epoch – and thus into a field of meanings that we did not author and in terms of which we must understand ourselves – means that we are inevitably alienated; for Loewald, it is in this thrown field that one has at least the possibility for authentic self-development and open engagement with the world. Obviously, this is a debate that needs to be pursued. But the important point for the present discussion is that the way to think this difference through is in terms of the final cause of psychoanalysis: what do we understand by freedom and how are we to aim for it? Without this point of reference, there will only be interminable disagreement. I believe that, although there are significant differences, there are also occasions for genuine integration of Gray, Loewald, Kleinian and Lacanian approaches. These tend to get overlooked because the question of the final cause of psychoanalysis has been ignored.

3. *Freedom to be and let be*

As one listens over time to analysands, one comes to hear that there are certain very basic categories in terms of which people try to make sense of their lives. That is, will they be able to make sense of themselves as someone who is capable of loving or of being loved? Will they be capable of creative engagement in the world? Can they be a friend? These categories are important psychoanalytically for two reasons. First, these are not experienced as discrete achievements or failures on the part of the analysand; rather, they are the categories in which analysands conceive of themselves as *having an*

existence. It is in these terms that they conceive of themselves as succeeding or failing to have a life. They are *subjective categories* in the sense that they are the terms in which people try to shape themselves as a certain sort of subject (Lear, 2003, pp. 31–88). For Mr. A, to be was to succeed at being a husband, a father and a colleague. But, secondly, these terms need to be subjectively understood: they are not mere social roles. That is, part of what it is to constitute oneself as a lover, subjectively understood, is increasingly to determine for oneself what it is to be a lover. And that, in turn, requires that one continually be able to notice, react to and appropriate one's own emerging impulses, thoughts and feelings to a life so-constituted. This is what it is to be able to constitute oneself as a lover.

None of the techniques we have approached specifically addresses this form of freedom, though each of them can be part of a process by which it develops. I suspect it has been avoided because analysts want to avoid anything that smacks of the ethical for fear of imposing an image of how to live on their analysands. But freedom to be, as I understand it, is not about fitting any social role or social image; indeed, it constitutes itself as freedom precisely by its independence from any particular image. Should an analysand desire to become a person who is capable of love – a lover, for instance – the question of what that consists in will essentially be up to him.

The contemporary Kleinians have, in their discussion of envy, explicitly embraced the idea that psychoanalysis has an unavoidably ethical dimension. Envy manifests itself most notably in the attack on creative capacities of another. In the analytic situation there are regularly envious attacks on the analyst: from overt attacks upon the analyst's ability to minor acts of denigration like missing of analytic hours, coming late. A Kleinian might well look on Mr. A's outburst as an envious attack on the analytic process itself. Now psychoanalysis cannot be neutral with respect to the question whether it is promoting envy or helping to diminish the need for envious attacks. It is not a live option for an analyst to say to herself: 'This analysand seems to revel in the envious attacks upon others – especially me – so I should facilitate a process by which he can get really good at envious destruction.' One of the crucial Kleinian insights is that freedom *to* ... is at the same time freedom *from*: freedom from envious attacks, self- and other-destruction. While analysis may recognize envy, tolerate it up to a point, try to interpret it and so on, it is constitutionally directed *away from* envy. It tries to understand its sources and, through analysis, diminish the felt need to deploy it. This is basically an ethical dimension to psychoanalysis. It recognizes that freedom to be inherently involves *freedom to let others be*. One develops one's own freedom as a subject as one can increasingly learn to recognize, tolerate, and on occasion celebrate the reality of other subjects. Psychoanalysis is inherently committed to the recognition and acceptance of the reality of other subjects: and this is an inescapably ethical commitment.

Two cheers for efficient causes

So, imagine yourself in the midst of an analytic moment with your own Mr. A: is there a right answer to which of the approaches you should choose? I think

there is: choose that approach which, given your overall understanding of Mr. A, and your best grasp of what is going on in the here-and-now best facilitates that aspect of Mr. A's freedom which you take to be most salient. On different occasions one may make different choices. The biggest mistake, it seems to me, is to think that one has to make one's decision based on what is actually in the analysand's mind in the here-and-now. Not only is it often true that, epistemically speaking, we simply do not know all that much about what is really in the analysand's mind at any given moment; but, metaphysically speaking, there may be no fully determinate answer as to what is going on. So, even if we are primarily concerned with analyzing what is going on in the here-and-now, *it does not follow* that the analysis of that moment ought only to make reference to materials that are themselves available in the here-and-now. To think that it does is a symptom of something that went wrong in the history of psychoanalysis: the assumption that the only scientifically respectable causes in the explanation and treatment of human beings are efficient causes. Efficient causes are those antecedent states of affairs – in this case, mental states – that are sufficient to bring about the state of affairs that needs to be explained. It is this image of scientific explanation that is responsible for so much of the controversy – as vituperative as it was fruitless – that plagued the discipline throughout the last century. The fact is that if we want to understand human action, the role of self-consciousness in human action, as well as the repetitions, distortions and disruptions of unconscious fantasy, we need a rigorous understanding of the spontaneity of the human mind as well as the role of final cause in human action (Rödl, 2007; Thompson, 2008). Empiricism, the traditional model of scientific explanation, concerned as it is with efficient-causal explanation of a distinct object of inquiry, is incapable of providing insight into either area (Rödl, 2007).

Consider, for example, Freud's discussion of the condensation of ideas in primary process. Condensation is a significant psychic process: many disparate thoughts and wishes can be condensed into a single dream image. But one only discovers the condensation via an ongoing analysis, *after the dream*, in which the analysand continues to associate to the dream-image. The name 'condensation' suggests that the meanings were already there, before the dream, and causally served to bring it about. Perhaps some did. But what really grounds our confidence that *all* the ideas were already there, causing the dream, as opposed to unfolding in the analytic process in response to the dream and its analysis? Of course, on occasion we will know through the analysis that a certain theme has been a long-standing concern of the analysand's. Even so, how could one know that it was actually serving a causal role in the production of the dream, as opposed to being imaginatively tied in with it later? The honest answer is that there is no satisfying way to answer this question. But this will matter only if one assumes that the only scientifically respectable form of explanation is in terms of efficient causes. By contrast, if one is *also* concerned with the final cause of freedom, then it will not particularly matter whether a given idea caused a dream (chicken) or the dream facilitated an association to the idea (egg). What will matter is the overall direction of the analysand's imagination: is it inhibiting or facilitating the analysand's movement towards freedom, and in what ways?

Just as Freud introduced the notion of condensation of ideas, we need to countenance the notion of condensation *of strategies*. Not that they all need be antecedently present in the mind as fully-formed states that could be discovered as the efficient causes of what follows. Rather, they are there in the sense of being unfinished directions in which the mind might go. The aim of an analytic intervention is to facilitate a movement in the direction of (some aspect of) freedom. To do this, one needs to take the final cause into account. [To use Aristotelian language: only when we have a better understanding of the final cause of psychoanalysis (freedom) will we be able adequately to adjudicate differences about the *formal* cause – the technique that constitutes the form of psychoanalytic activity. For the form ought also to be (a manifestation of) freedom.]

I shall close with an unusual claim: if we want to make real advances in technique we need to get clearer about what freedom is, and why it matters to us. Thus philosophical inquiry lies at the heart of psychoanalytic technique. Even in the minutest here-and-now moment of a psychoanalytic session, how can we evaluate it properly if we have only the vaguest sense of what we are aiming for – or why we are aiming for that, rather than something else? In recent decades it has been familiar to see psychoanalysis as divided between theory and clinical practice. In fact, even to conceptualize the division in this way is a sign of the pathology of our times. It is certainly true that much writing that goes under the heading of theory is cut off from clinical experience; and it is often pursued in terms so abstract that it is hard to know what, if anything, the author is talking about. No wonder clinical practitioners feel they do not have to pay attention, but this can encourage complacency among them. While it may be true that they do not need to attend to the latest theoretical fad, it is also true that they cannot really understand their own clinical activity if they lack understanding of what it is they are trying to bring about – or why it is worthwhile to do so. In this sense, philosophy does not lie over there, in theory; it pulses in the heartbeat of the clinical encounter.

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Translations of summary

Technik und Zweckursache in der Psychoanalyse: Vier Möglichkeiten, einen Moment zu betrachten. In diesem Beitrag wird die These vertreten, dass es bei der Betrachtung eines einzigen klinischen Moments keine von Grundsätzen geleitete Möglichkeit gibt, zwischen verschiedenartigen

Zugängen zur psychoanalytischen Technik zu entscheiden. Darüber hinaus ist die von Aristoteles beschriebene Zweckursache zu berücksichtigen, nämlich im Falle der Psychoanalyse, so der Beitrag, die Freiheit. Freiheit an sich ist allerdings ein offenes Konzept mit mannigfaltigen Aspekten, die unter einem psychoanalytischen Blickwinkel untersucht und ausgearbeitet werden müssen. Dieser Beitrag untersucht einen einzelnen analytischen Moment unter den Blickwinkeln der Techniken Paul Grays, Hans Loewalds, der heutigen Kleinianer und Jacques Lacans. Wenn wir diese Techniken zu evaluieren haben, so die These, müssen wir die je unterschiedlich konzeptualisierte Freiheit, die sie zu fördern versuchen, mit berücksichtigen.

Técnica y causa final en psicoanálisis: Cuatro maneras de considerar un momento. Este trabajo sostiene que si consideramos sólo un momento de la clínica, es posible que no haya una manera ética de elegir entre los distintos enfoques de la técnica psicoanalítica. Además, debe tenerse en cuenta lo que Aristóteles llamó la causa final. Según el autor de este trabajo, en el caso del psicoanálisis esta causa es la libertad. Sin embargo, la libertad misma es un concepto abierto, con muchas facetas que deben ser exploradas y desarrolladas desde una perspectiva psicoanalítica. Este trabajo examina un momento analítico desde las técnicas de Paul Gray, Hans Loewald, los kleinianos contemporáneos y Jacques Lacan. El autor sostiene que para evaluar estas técnicas debemos tener en cuenta las distintas concepciones de la libertad que ellas tratan de facilitar.

Technique et but final en psychanalyse: Quatre façons de voir un moment. Cet article propose qu'en partant d'un moment clinique unique, il n'y ait pas de façon dictée par des principes de choisir une des différentes approches de technique psychanalytique. De plus, il faut considérer ce qu'Aristotele appelait le but final de la psychanalyse, proposé dans cet article d'être la liberté. Cependant, la liberté est en soi un concept vague avec de nombreux aspects qui doivent être explorés et développés dans une perspective psychanalytique. Cet article traite d'un moment analytique dans les perspectives des techniques de Paul Gray, Hans Loewald, des Kleinians contemporains ainsi que de Jacques Lacan. Il soutient que, si nous voulons évaluer ces techniques, nous devons prendre en compte les conceptions différentes de liberté qu'ils essayent tous de faciliter.

Tecnica e causa finale in psicoanalisi: Quattro modi di considerare un determinato momento. Questo lavoro vuol dimostrare come possa venir meno ogni solido principio fondamentale che consenta di poter scegliere un approccio teorico piuttosto che un altro, qualora si prenda in esame un solo elemento clinico. Si deve inoltre tener conto ciò che Aristotele definiva la causa finale; proponiamo qui che, in psicoanalisi, tale causa finale sia la libertà. Tuttavia, il concetto stesso di libertà è indefinito e eterogeneo, costituito da molti aspetti che devono essere esplorati e articolati secondo una prospettiva psicoanalitica. Questo lavoro prende in esame un particolare momento analitico e lo assume da quattro diversi approcci tecnici: quello di Paul Gray, Hans Loewald, i Kleiniani contemporanei e Jacques Lacan. Si giunge alla conclusione che nel valutare queste tecniche sia necessario tenere conto delle diverse concezioni di libertà che ognuna di esse implica e tenta di promuovere.

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