

PSYCHOANALYTIC THERAPY: BASICS

*Book review: Thoma H. Kachele H. Psychoanalytic Therapy: Basics.
Vol.1. 2017. Publishing House “Nekeri” (Georgian Translation)*

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There are two options to write the book review: descriptive and critical. I'll pursue the first one – descriptive – due to the impact the book, *Psychoanalytic Therapy: Basics. Vol.1. 2017. Publishing House “Nekeri”*, can influence the foundation and extension of knowledge on psychoanalysis in general in Georgia.

There were quite few books available in psychoanalysis in Georgian till 2005. Afterwards translation of psychoanalytic literature by the different publishing houses flooded the book market. However the quality of translation and particularly the essence and exact definitions of psychoanalytic concepts presented there stays questionable. The new translated books are full of misinterpretations and mismatch with conceptual framework of psychoanalysis. Not to say that sometimes they are more literary interpretations rather than authors' original work on different themes and topics.

Translation of seminal work by Dr. Helmut Thoma and Dr. Horst Kachele, *Psychoanalytic Practice*, is the major step forward to introduce the state-of-arts in contemporary psychoanalysis: theory and practice available in Georgian for professionals and academics, as well as for students and interested audience in general.

The Georgian translation of the book starts with the introduction to one of the authors H. Kachele with the clear statement that the book is a challenge to identify different approaches and schools existing in contemporary psychoanalysis and facilitates the research in framework of psychoanalytic theory and ground the psychoanalytic research in full format. The book is for informed audience in psychoanalysis, but beginners with vigor can also benefit from it.

The book has 10 chapters. The 1st discusses the state-of-art of contemporary psychoanalysis; the following chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 provide the overview of basic concepts of psychoanalysis theory and practice such as transfer and interaction, counter transference, resistance and dream interpretation. The following chapters are concentrated on clinical work and discuss the issues of first interview and latent third party attendee [chapter 6], rules of psychoanalysis [chapter 7], means and objectives [chapter 8], process of psychoanalysis [chapter 9] and interconnection of psychoanalytic theory and practice [chapter 10].

Discussing the contemporary psychoanalysis authors highlight two propositions: first they quote frequently and in detail the founding father and second, critically evaluate the concepts and interpretations developed from the classical theory. Authors use the common sense approach to discuss the current standing in theory and practice. They recognize development as a main principle for re-definitions and explorations in psychoanalytic theory and follow the route proposed by Freud – “psychoanalysis is developing slowly and accurately. The development never ends and psychoanalysis is ready to change and improve itself” (გომე ჰ. კეხელე ჰ. 2017, p. 1).

Authors identify the main challenge of psychoanalytic tradition – the problem of operationalization of concepts and creating the evidence based epistemology of the theory, practice and treatment. They are introducing the concepts of causality in time slot – interconnecting “far past” and “here and now” as the dyadic system to analyze case, maintaining the person as an agent of free will and responsible for the performance in life (გომე ჰ. კეხელე ჰ. 2017, p. 6-7).

Discussing the issue of “classics” or “classical psychoanalysis” authors suggest that the term is an oxymoron. Normative definition of classics is something that cannot be changed and excludes development. Psychoanalysis is ongoing flow of evolution of different approaches and explanatory models of theories. Furthermore any identification as a classics kills the idea of science and ongoing process of knowledge creation. The history of psychoanalytical tradition shows that there is no standard technique, rather modifications, variations and interpretative approach to the cause. The latter leads to research in psychoanalysis.

The issue of interaction during the therapeutic process being cause of debate from different perspectives – as something that should be formed in advance of therapy and have to be pursued without any deviations. Authors suggest to shift this approach to a problem based approach that automatically leads to the quest – is there any fixed matrix of doing analytical therapy? The answer is, that “it is an art, with clear rules and procedures that make psychoanalytical intervention possible”, (გომე ჰ. კეხელე ჰ. 2017, p.18-19) resonating with methodology of human science and ethics of intervention in general.

Authors share position that psychoanalysis is theory of systemic psychopathology of conflicts and the objects of the conflict can vary from inter and intra – psyche conflicts with self and with others [object relation, attachments, affiliations, identities, etc.]. The art of interpretation in psychoanalysis remains the issue and is difficult avoid the insufficiency of existing justifications in terms of scientific validation and reliability.

Authors are focusing on the crisis of theory and highlight Freud’s aspiration to create the metapsychological theory based on principles of dynamics, topics and economy. Repression as a main concept of psychoanalysis and others derive from the metapsychological theory however the 100 years of existence of the theory explores different means to justify the concepts. The concept are discussed further in details in context how unconscious influence the human fate and development of disorders.

The chapter ten is summarizing the existing knowledge in psychoanalysis as an interaction of theory and practical implications. They state that connection between theory and practice is justifiable only in case when effectiveness of psychoanalytic treatment is evidence based and is followed by creation of knowledge.

The knowledge in psychoanalysis is created due a specific dyad interaction that leads patients to insights cause cure due to interpretations/definitions psychoanalysts provide. The knowledge transmitted in dyadic system is different than ‘accumulated knowledge’. Dyadic system itself is the focus of research and treatment. Authors argue that any descriptive or classificatory knowledge, like symptom classification, is not sufficient to know the causes and cannot answer the main question “WHY”, that is the key question for understanding of human behavior. They argue that failure of behaviorism as a therapy failed avoiding to answer the question of why, dropping out the human being as a personality, who has the meaningful past and meanings are created by him as a stand point for his/her behavior.

Authors specifically stress that there is two types of knowledge that do not follow automatically from each other. One is the pure theory of psychoanalysis, descriptive knowledge including the forms of causal explanations. The second is applied psychoanalysis – scope of knowledge on substantial and operational technologies, including knowledge of treatment. These two are different types of epistemology and they are valued by different criteria. They also highlight that there is no complete set of empirically proved psychoanalytic technologies that these technologies could be applied in practice and they are reliable and effective.

The key issue discussed from different angles is how we interact with person in psychoanalysis assuming that conflict is based on unconscious experience and is represented in emotions. The difference that makes this book intriguing is how submissive patient is replaced with active and full empowered personality finding the own way to life and living via specific dyadic interaction in psychoanalytical treatment.

The Georgian translation of the book is excellent opportunity to meet the arts of psychoanalysis on evidence based approach and justified inferences. Authors’ narrative is provocative and drives the reader to own reflection on the topic and creates the space for further development of ideas and hypothesis for future studies.

References

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