

FOREWORD to **From Id to Intersubjectivity**

Professor Robert King PhD
Queensland University of Technology
Australia

In this book Dianna Kenny sets out to discover what remains of Freud in contemporary psychoanalytic practice. To do this, she engages us in an intensive dialogue with four eminent practitioners. While no four people can be said to be representative of an entire community of practitioners they are each distinctive and different with respect to their theoretical framework and the cultural milieu within which they operate. After the interviews, she lets them loose on a therapy transcript, which acts as a kind of Rorschach inkblot onto which they project their fantasies about the patient and the therapist.

Before we meet the four clinicians, Professor Kenny sets the scene with an unusually lucid exposition of the core ideas of Freud and post-Freudian psychoanalysis. This is an heroic task to accomplish in two chapters but she achieves it with remarkable fluency. Inevitably some detail is missing but the core ideas are so clearly enunciated that these chapters alone will prove to be invaluable to any person seeking to navigate this complex and jargon-infested territory.

The four interviews that follow are themselves outstanding exemplars of psychoanalytic enquiry. I cannot put it more clearly than Robert Stolorow, who said at the end of the interview 'Your questions were very thoughtful and incisive.' It is clear that Professor Kenny had a plan that she brought to each interview. Her plan was informed by a close reading of the published work of each clinician and curiosity about how their ideas and approaches related to other strands of psychoanalytic thinking. However, she never allowed the plan to get in the way of the conversation and many of the questions were stimulated by the thoughts of the person she was interviewing. Indeed, there were times when the questions were as interesting and informative as the responses.

This is a scholarly work, with all the key ideas assiduously footnoted or referenced. The reader will have no difficulty further exploring any of the many thought-provoking fragments that the conversations weave together. However, it is much more than scholarly. There is an intimacy to the interviews, which enables each clinician to tell a very personal story. We are constantly reminded that an intellectual journey is shaped by life experience and not just by reading and ideas. For clinicians this is in part vicarious life experience through constant engagement with patients. However, through these interviews we also learn about formative personal life experiences such as the death of a spouse, working in an overburdened health system, or the search for a father.

When it comes to the transcripts, each of the therapists adopts the position of the 'master clinician' or therapy supervisor. Here we encounter something of the

superego of each clinician. They are not always in agreement as to what the therapist might do better but they share what might best be described as a clear vision for how the work should proceed. Stolorow put it most graphically when he said in response to one of the therapist's interventions, "The therapist is still pursuing a cognitive behavioural approach, which is not, at this point, helpful to the patient". Each of the clinicians felt strongly about both therapist and patient and were emphatic in their advice-giving to the therapist which was motivated by an unwillingness to provide tacit endorsement of interventions that they considered less than ideal from their perspective.

However, after the thoughtful and sometimes humble communication in the four interviews, the assumption of the role of expert came as something of a shock. There is a lot we can learn about therapeutic technique from the responses to the transcript. It also reminds us how strongly identified clinicians are with the patient and how little patience they can have with therapists, who struggle with their patients down difficult byways.

A truly unique feature of this book is the textual and thematic analysis of the four interviews that aims to identify the similarities and "real" differences in the conceptualization of the key concepts in psychoanalytic process. This was enriched by the application of textual and conceptual analyses of the psychotherapists' commentaries on the transcript of the analytic session, followed by the identification of commonalities in the overall case formulation. In these three processes, Professor Kenny demonstrated that underneath the somewhat unique vocabularies and concepts of these four branches of psychoanalytic practice were common core concepts that inform therapist behaviour in the session.

I hope you enjoy this book as much as I have. It did not set out to provide you with a complete or fully integrated picture of contemporary psychoanalytic thinking; it does, however, provide you with an excellent overview. Furthermore, it will give you more than a glimpse into the world of the practicing clinician. It may also help you understand something Allan Abbas did not when he said 'I don't know what might be happening in psychoanalytic treatments that take so long... I can't see the added value --- the health dollar is so stretched.' Psychoanalysis may not be the most cost effective treatment but the conversations with Spielman, Holmes and Stolorow do take us to where we might find some of the added value.

Robert King, PhD, FAPS
Professor and Coordinator of Clinical Psychology Training
School of Psychology and Counselling
Queensland University of Technology