



WILL THERAPY

Otto Rank

p. 72 - Likeness and Difference, Chap. V.

The Oedipus Saga explains, therefore, that it is not good to seek behind appearances for the true being of things, for the more one experiences of truth, the more one knows, the unluckier one becomes.

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To burden them with still more consciousness as the purely analytic therapy does, means to make their condition worse. What they need is an emotional experience which is intense enough to lighten the tormenting self consciousness.

Book 2.

p. 149 - Ideological versus dynamic therapy.

For real psychotherapy is not concerned primarily with adaptation to any kind of self, that is, with his acceptance of his own individuality or of that part of his personality which he has formerly denied.

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....whether any ideological therapy, which interprets the patient according to a certain scheme, is useful in general for the treatment of individual neuroses, or whether, for that purpose, a dynamic therapy is not needed which rests on no universal ideology but takes the dynamics of each particular case for the basis of



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the therapeutic action.

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In dynamic therapy, which does not aim at knowledge but strives to help, the general psychological understanding of the therapist is applied to permit him

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If I could heal by means of suggestion, I should do it without being ashamed of it. However, if there exists any danger of suggestion in dynamic therapy it is rather the possibility that one might allow oneself to be influenced by the patient.....

p. 173, Life Fear and Death Fear, chap. II

Beyond that, however, for me, the birth trauma was also a symbol of the original suffering nature of man which according to the psychoanalytic conception had been caused in the first place by some guilt of the individual or the environment and could be corrected therapeutically or prophylactically (educationally).

p. 207, Total Ego and Partial Ego, Chap. III

...he is bound up in a kind of magic unity with the wholeness of life around him much more than the adjusted type who can be satisfied with the role of a part within the whole.

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The so-called "adaptation to reality" which the neurotic apparently envies the average man, corresponds to a re-orientation of the



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individual as a part in a whole, whether it be biologically in the family, socially in the professional group or nation (race) or ideologically in religion or a similar collectivity.1....

p. 215, Illness and Healing, chap.IV

Just so, the part that exercises this self-punishment, Freud's super-ego, is itself only an inner representative of outer sources of force (father, society) which once have punished or potentially could punish. In contradistinction to this view point, I assumed even in my first book, *Der Künstler* (1905), a capacity for inhibition instinct which I was not able to distinguish as will until later¹ after I had recognized its positive side as the organ of integration of the impulsive self and its constructive capacity for ruling, developing and changing, not only the surrounding world but the self.

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....that is, the intensified death fear is opposed to an increased drive to life, which the fear must hold in check so that it will not spend itself completely. This transforms death fear into life fear which, in the neurotic, paralyze each other

The productive type also turns, but in a less direct way, to others, whom, however, he makes dependent on himself rather than binds himself to them. He gives his work and not himself, unlike the average person who remains much more immediately tied up with life.



...while, quite the reverse, the neurotic, contrary to the common conception, represents the strong-willed type, but he can exercise his will only on his own ego and, on the whole, repressively.

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The recognition of this fact leads necessarily to my conception that the healing factor of psychotherapy consists not in psychological self knowledge and its ideological formulation, but in the therapist type itself, whom the neurotic seeks and wants to use as the ideal completion of his own ego.

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The cure of an illness seems to me almost always to mean more than a mere restoration, certainly in neurotic cases if the man becomes well at all, usually he becomes more healthy than he was before the illness or could have been without it, provided the treatment, organic just as often as analytic, does not destroy this self-creative "super healing."

First of all there can be no question of restoration, for the true neurotic was never capable of work and pleasure in the normal sense, and neither can he be brought to this commonplace ideal. He can become capable of living, that is, of overcoming fear sufficiently so that it does not constantly keep him from living.

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For the expression of emotion tends always to totality, which means a giving up of self or losing of self, in the last analysis, death. He who does not perceive emotional expression as renunciation, that is, who affirms and does not fear it, will not need to use either a physical or a psychic illness to drain off his emotional life.

The Role of the Therapist

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In order to be able to accept this self, which he earlier rejected, he must re-create the past symbolizing or representing this self, in terms of the new strengthened ego. Compared with the historical truth, one can designate this description of his past as "falsification of history" but in this sense almost all historical writing is not only viewed in the light of the present but also proves its actual worth there. Therapeutically, however, this falsification of the past is necessary in order that the individual may form a new ideology from his new interpretation of his life. The search for actual truth in relation to the past, or even to the present, which is very dubious in the psychic sphere in general because there are no historical documents except memory, is therapeutically unnecessary. The individual often lives better with his conception of things, than in the knowledge of the actual fact, perhaps is able to live only with his own conception of things. Finally, it is only the inner past that determines the present ego, and this can be revealed from the actual events only by understanding the individual's attitude toward them.



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I do not think, however, that it is always necessary or curative to destroy this illusion of the patient with reference to the difficulties of reality as he assumes them, or to show him how he also seeks to falsify the analytic experience post festum. For reality is at bottom not arranged differently, but these collective or at least socially recognized illusions function in place of the individual illusions appearing in the therapy. What the patient first of all can and must learn is to live at all, and this seems to me possible only with illusions. Analysis prefers to use the term sublimation, but can only mean illusion, for the one is based on the other, is at bottom the same.

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we refer in general to religion, art, play, sport and certain professional ideologies, which not only lift man out of his everydayness, but out of himself, not because he needs recreation, diversion, distraction, something higher, but because he could not exist at all on the plane of his own primitive self.

However, in order to be able to accept for himself any of the conventionally sanctioned illusions, through which it loses for him the character of illusion, he must first create in himself the presupposition required for it. This consists of finding an inner level of illusion of his own on which all experiencing as it were plays itself out potentially, like the shadows in Plato's cave without actually occurring.

(By "illusion" Rank does not mean falsity or self deception. He



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refers rather to a level of play, which permits us to make reality our own, a creativity of everyday living, as it were, not for a moment misunderstood or confused with the reality of the "not-self."

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The artistic life plan created through the therapeutic relationship is only gradually and not ever essentially differentiated from the illusory life plan, on which we all live ("Life is a Dream"). The neurotic is the type who can play no role in life because he either wants to live on a wholly primitive impulse level,.....or because (compulsion type) he has recognized behind the role the true self, and accordingly is no longer capable of illusion. In analysis he learns to live on the plane of illusion,...

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....can be represented as a battle for life heightened to the utmost between two individuals, one of whom must die that the other may live. Before we go into a psychological explanation of this formulation,

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....and indeed only on the ethical plane of the will-guilt problem, which presents itself in the individual as the fundamental life problem of growth and death. As guilt feeling arises on the one hand from the inhibiting death fear which does not let the individual grow and become independent, on the other hand from duty to the own ego, to which one owes the possibility of life and free development,..



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p. 275 The Individual and the Social

The neurotic has a bad relation to reality not because reality is bad, but because he wants to create it instead of using it.

...the fact that the human being apparently must always imagine or create a second "better" world, in order to be able to live in and with reality as given. But that seems to me less explicable on the basis of need for a better world because of unsatisfying reality, than from the necessity of having a second world by means of which we can carry out the fundamental ambivalence of the inner life.

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Reality, however, is therapeutically necessary to this inner stabilisation, therefore not an unavoidable evil, which one must accept because there is nothing else to do. For if we had not reality to project upon we should not only be shut off.....

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If an individual has too much inner freedom and independence, which is not so rare as one might believe, he will not only accept dependence and compulsion externally but actually be obliged to seek them in order to be able to live harmoniously. If, for example, an individual is very free in his professional life, then he may be inclined to bind himself strongly in his love life, but will in turn fight against these chains without getting free because this complete freedom would be for him still more unbearable.



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At all events the use or alteration of reality must come about individually, and is certainly determined for different types. It is important to remember that in the last analysis the neurotic remains as to type that which he was before the treatment, just as the psychopathic and also the creative type will always maintain their essential quality. If one conceives of the neurotic as a type, with psychological significance in itself, and not as a person deviating from a social norm, then one can see that there exists a place for this type socially, yes, a real need, otherwise he would perhaps not have come into existence in our civilization at all. If the fundamental life fear of the individual leads, figuratively speaking, to the end that he has no other choice than to be slain or to slay, the question is who are the sacrifices that must constantly fall in this way? I think it is the type which we today designate as neurotic and whom Nietzsche in the ideology of earlier times has described as the slave type. These humans who constantly kill themselves, perhaps to escape being sacrificed, need at all events not be killed any more in order to be utilized as fertilizers of civilization (Kulturdünger, an expression used by Freud who applied it in another connection). In offering themselves up as it were in a false Christian sense, they make it not too hard for the others who slay, the lordly natures, the men of will. In view of the difficulties of the therapy one must ask whether it is not a vain therapeutic ambition to want to transform this sacrificial type into god-men, and even if this were successful, where shall be forthcoming the necessary hecatombs for the creative type.



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The man is inclined to react destructively, the woman conservingly, due to the fact that the man is in general more wilful (destructive and creative) in his adjustment, the woman more emotional (preserving).

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The much misused slogan of the modern man that marriage destroys love, loses much of its value through the consideration that perhaps this is the goal of marriage, not of necessity to destroy love, but to moderate it so that it is possible to live with it, since pure love kills the individual as a social being because it means a total giving up of the individuality.

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A deeper study of the love life makes it clear also that human beings depend more on the one who rules them than on the one who loves them. Love, where it exists in such cases, is then taken only as proof that this ruling will not be too severe or earnest, that one will be punished just enough to spare self-punishment, but that this punishment will be no death punishment. Another more social form of paying off is work, however satisfying or creative it may be.

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One must be able to take and give different things on different sides, that is, to bear dependence, which, however is no longer perceived as such when one feels oneself as part, not as an undivided and invisible whole.



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For the only therapy is real life. The patient must learn to live, to live with his split, his conflict, his ambivalence, which no therapy can take away, for if it could, it would take with it the actual spring of life. The more truly the ambivalence is accepted the more life and possibilities of life will the human being have and be able to use. If he only understands how to live in harmony with the inevitable, that is, with the inevitable in himself, not outside, then he will also be able to accept reality as it is. This is no fatalistic and passive acceptance, but rather an active constructive utilization. Finally, therefore, everything depends on the attitude of the particular individual to the given factors, including primarily himself. In the last analysis therapy can only strive for a new attitude toward the self, a new valuation of it in relation to the past, and a new balancing in relation to and by means of, present reality.