**The twin factors: transference and resistance**

Workshop in Amsterdam September 2019

As a member of the Dutch core group 10, I had the privilege to take part in the Amsterdam seminar, (19th September 2019) led by John Rathauser, Ph.D. He is one of the ISTDP masters ,living in New Jersey, USA , and he was trained by Professor Dr Habib Davanloo himself.

During our ISTDP core group training of 3 years duration we focused on the basic principles of ISTDP theory and techniques. We learned how to establish a working alliance with our patients. We learned how to take the steps of the Central Dynamic Sequence (CDS) in order to unlock our patients´ core neurotic traumata, which are buried in their Unconscious. Our core group teacher and supervisor, Kees Cornelissen, had endless patience and care when sharing with us his knowledge. We worked with the triangles of conflict and persons and in our interactions with our patients we did our best to help them to drop their defences and allowing us to witness their inner world, showing us their core neurotic conflicts. Taking the steps of the CDS correctly creates a safe holding environment for the patient. Learning which steps of the CDS to take and why, requires discipline and is comparable – at least in my view - with the work of a musician : in following the beat the rhythm is created.

The seminar of John Rathauser led us into this world of staying on the road to the patient´s unconscious, assessing the patient´s variables, holding on to our interventions over and over again, without reluctance or pause.

John Rathauser showed us his love for dogs by caressing and cuddling the only dog that was there, my assistant dog. However, it seems he himself is very familiar with a special dog: a terrier. He fetches the patient´s defences without a break, and without losing empathy or respect for the patient . And in this way he attacks the defences of the patient : one after another. Not in a violent way, but steadfast. And when the patient´s character resistance crystallizes into the transference , he increases his pressure to the

patient´s feelings in the transference until the patient again takes refuge into defences . As such the patient is given the opportunity to

become familiar with the self defeating mechanisms he puts into

operation and with which he maintains his misery. A self-defeating structure he created himself as a reaction to early trauma in the attachment bonds with his caretakers. John Rathauser showed us video vignettes of his work with a patient. I found it an inspiring experience to see him working and I noticed it had a great impact on my own therapeutic work afterwards.

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