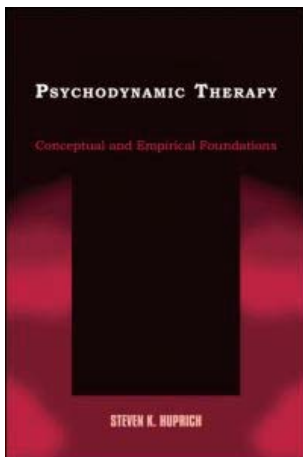


Book Review
**Psychodynamic Therapy:
Conceptual and Empirical Foundations**

Steven K. Huprich
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The climate in American universities is very conflicted with respect to the teaching of psychoanalytic principles. Over the last several decades the influence of psychoanalysis has shrunk in psychology departments, psychiatry training programs and schools of social work, and it has been replaced with cognitive behavioral therapy principles and biological-medical models of pathology. At the same time psychoanalysis has flourished in the humanities (e.g., in Departments of English, History, Cultural Studies, etc.), and, as such, it is viewed with suspicion by the insurance industry and by empirical researchers. *Psychodynamic Therapy: Conceptual and Empirical Foundations* by Steven K. Huprich, Ph.D. is thus a needed antidote, to borrow a biological metaphor, to the waning influence of psychoanalysis in the teaching of the helping professions.

Huprich's book is a valuable text for its ability to a) discuss and integrate a number of theoretical differences among various psychoanalytic theories in a concise and clear way, b) provide a broad based review of empirical literature that not only supports psychoanalytic principles but shows that psychoanalysis is actually more likely to serve as a comprehensive theory to bridge basic research in the neurosciences to theories of personality, the unconscious, and therapeutic action. This text is intended for beginning therapists and is an extremely useful text for those studying to become therapists because it as well written, does not assume prior familiarity with psychoanalytic principles, and nonetheless is comprehensive without being pedantic.

The book is divided into three main sections: Theoretical Underpinnings, Treatment Principles and Empirical Support, Therapeutic Process, and it begins with the presentation of two cases from Huprich's work. These clinical encounters are used to illustrate the concepts discussed throughout the book. They are interesting cases because they could easily be viewed through an overly medicalized lens and be seen as little more than a collection of symptoms to be eradicated except that Huprich provides the reader with the stories of their lives as heard by a psychoanalytic listener. That which a medical-biological point of view would understand and treat as a passive disease process, Huprich makes intelligible via a psychoanalytic understanding of the irrational.

For example, one case involves a 19 yr. old high school dropout who had developed «severe bouts of panic that had come upon him about 8 months earlier for no apparent reason» (p. 3).

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Under many contemporary treatment guidelines in the United States, the assessment of the individual would largely involve a combination of the history of symptoms and use of questionnaires designed to measure quantitatively the anxiety level of the individual. It would be standard practice to initiate medical intervention in the form of anti-anxiety medication as well as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) focused on dispelling his irrational fears as quickly as possible. Rapid symptom reduction would be of paramount concern. Treatment would likely be quite didactic and directive. Instead, Huprich provides a context for listening to what might otherwise be thought of as irrelevant background noise. Via a listening process that does not direct the patient into the preferred, predetermined areas of interest to the clinician, we learn that this young man has suppressed a great deal of anger at his parents who were pushing him to become more independent and yet he was simultaneously fearful of losing them (as his initial panic attack was unconsciously associated with the death of his favorite uncle). A disease of anxiety instead is revealed to be a story of covert rage and a struggle to become a responsible adult. Huprich illustrates that his symptoms hold meaning and that understanding the meanings of his symptoms could provide insight into his experiences and relief for him. Huprich holds open the possibility that the young man could think of himself as an agent and not as a victim.

Following the presentation of cases, which illustrates a psychoanalytic method to understanding individuals, Huprich discusses theoretical underpinnings of psychoanalytic work. Beginning with Freud and continuing through ego psychology, object relations, and self psychology, major concepts in psychoanalysis are discussed in a way that beginning therapists could understand. For those more familiar with psychoanalysis, this brief review of theory reads in a very progressive manner over the history of psychoanalytic thinking. Substantial attention is given to Heinz Hartmann, Jacob Arlow and Charles Brenner, Margaret Mahler, Edith Jacobsen, Melanie Klein, Michael Balint, Donald W. Winnicott, William R. D. Fairbairn, Harry Guntrip, Harry Stack Sullivan, and Heinz Kohut.

The book provides a sequence of discussing issues that have the potential to be understood as part of a whole, rather than as disconnected or merely contradictory theoretical viewpoints in psychoanalysis. The book makes areas of conflict quite clear, but the effect of reading through concise descriptions of the theories is that it helps articulate commonalities more clearly. Because this text is aimed at beginning level therapists, this approach is effective. Students can and should delve into more detail in subsequent portions of their training. In fact those who well versed with psychoanalysis would benefit from this refresher of historical debates in psychoanalysis.

Huprich continues to display the evolution of psychoanalysis through attempts at integration, such as via Kernberg, and further extensions of psychoanalytic thinking with discussion of analytic/introjective configurations in the development of pathology, sadomasochism, attachment theory, mentalization and reflective functioning, intersubjectivity and co-constructed reality in psychotherapy, and cognitive experiential theory. Thus, the book captures the influence of relational work in contemporary American psychoanalysis. As such, it is best to understand this book as grounded on the work of theorists who have been most influential in American psychoanalysis. The book does not cover Lacan, Kristeva, Matte-Blanco and others who have been influential outside of America. In the United States many contemporary European and South American thinkers would be considered part of advanced or specialized studies in psychoanalysis. Lacan, for example, has been quite influential in American humanities departments compared to education directed at training mental health professionals.



In the second section Huprich provides an overview of basic principles involved in psychodynamic therapy. He addresses a variety of modalities and views psychoanalytic work as part of a continuum. He explicitly discusses that for purposes of this introductory text he uses the terms *psychoanalytic* and *psychodynamic* interchangeably, while noting the nature of conflicts in the field about the usages of these terms. He discusses the goals of psychodynamic work and the nature of the therapeutic alliance, free association, transference/countertransference, interpretation and resistance. Following this he explores empirical studies in psychoanalytic work, especially focused on the therapeutic aspects he had just discussed.

Thus, a beginning student can see an organized presentation of basic psychoanalytic principles followed by a discussion of empirical research relevant to those principles. Research on various elements is described (e.g., on transference, countertransference, etc.) followed by a chapter concerning research into the global process and outcome of psychoanalytic work. Huprich concludes the section on treatment principles and empirical support with a chapter on cognitive neuroscience, with particular attention to research involved in unconscious processes.

In order to make this work intelligible, he discusses some basic concepts of cognitive neuroscience. At first blush a discussion of a concept such as attention appears far removed from the work of psychoanalytic therapists, but Huprich is able to explicate the relevance of basic research in information processing and neuroscience to psychoanalytic theory. Academic research into implicit and explicit memory and connectionist models of memory might provide empirical grounding for unconscious mental processes. In fact it is not possible to understand human information processing without models of unconscious processing. Huprich summarizes research exploring such links. For example, the work of Westen and Gabbard (2002) suggests a relationship between transference and the findings of cognitive neuroscience, especially that most representations are multimodal and exist as potentials for activation. Representations exist in multiple networks along with different affects and motives. Unconscious procedures manage emotions, which could be thought of as analogous to defenses. While conscious representations are some of the representations that are activated, other representations are activated, which are not conscious. Consciousness operates via serial processing, while the parallel processing system is important to understand behavior does not operate at a conscious level.

The final section explicates the therapeutic process of psychoanalytic work and uses a specific case in depth to address the various principles discussed in the book. This section begins with some discussion of the Psychodynamic Diagnostic Manual (PDM), which was published in 2006. An alternative to the DSM-IV-TR, the PDM offers a more comprehensive format for assessing individuals than the DSM-IV-TR. The assessment process via the PDM is rich and grounded in psychoanalytic principles, including descriptions of various disorders and a far more extensive and nuanced assessment approach to understanding the problems of children than the DSM series has ever offered. Huprich illustrates how the PDM can serve as a starting point for assessing individuals for psychoanalytic work and covers various aspects of an assessment process, including biological and temperament factors, life situation, personality organization, defenses, ego functioning, object relations, self representations, esteem & agency, insight and reflective functioning and sociocultural factors. An understanding of personality is considered essential in any psychoanalytic assessment, which is divergent from the DSM approach of de-contextualizing symptoms.

The book concludes with a rich case illustration from Huprich's work. Huprich discusses a young man who presented with depression and relationship complaints. He weaves this man's life story together with psychoanalytic principles discussed throughout the book. He illustrates



how a psychodynamic understanding provided him with coherence to the case that would not have been possible when thinking in a more medical framework.

This book provides beginning therapists and those who teach psychotherapy a clear, concise and thoughtful introduction to psychoanalytic principles. It would be helpful reading for any who have little familiarity with psychoanalysis to begin learning to become acquainted with psychoanalytic principles. This would also be a useful text for students who are in training programs that are not psychoanalytically oriented as well, because of the integration of theory, research and practice.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Westen, D., & Gabbard, G. O. (2002). Developments in Cognitive Neuroscience: II. Implications for Theories of Transference. *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association, 50*: 99-143.

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- Part I: Theoretical Underpinnings. Basic Principles of Psychoanalytic and Psychodynamic Theory. The Evolution of Theory I: Drive, Ego, Object, and Self. The Evolution of Theory II: Integration and Expansion.
- Part II: Treatment Principles and Empirical Support. Basic Principles of Treatment. Empirical Studies of Psychoanalytic and Psychodynamic Psychotherapy. Theories and Empirical Studies of Therapeutic Action. Cognitive Neuroscience.
- Part III: Therapeutic Process. Diagnosis and Assessment. Case Study.